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Spectacle, pageantry, and parading

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SPECTACLE, PAGEANTRY, AND PARADING

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Figure 1: Wizard of Oz krewe, Box of Wine parade 2011

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Abstract

We celebrate the arrival of spring with revelry in search of catharsis. Carnival's roots trace from the ancient Greek and Roman pagan celebrations, to the pageant wagons of the Medieval theatre and the French masquerades, and on through the Mardi Gras celebrations in New Orleans. Mardi Gras is part of Louisiana's rich cultural history of parading and spectacle, as well as public art and performance, as a civic responsibility, and as an economic booster.

Blaine Kern's Mardi Gras World builds parade floats, large-scale sculptures, and props for Mardi Gras, theme parks, and casinos around the world. I interned with Kern Studios and detail my experiences in prop building, including the armature, foam carving, paper-mâché, and installation.

I combined the knowledge I gained from Kern Studios and my own work studying Properties Technology in the theatre department at Louisiana State University in construction, painting, textiles, and carving to create my own parade float. I marched in the Box of Wine parade 2011 with my float based on the poppy field from the *Wizard of Oz*. I narrate the float building process from initial design, budgeting, trial-and-error, completion of the elements, final installation, and the parade event. By building my own project from inception to completion, I gained a broad experience in parading and spectacle.

Chapter 1: Introduction

My love affair with the theatre began at age four when I saw a dress rehearsal of *Romeo and Juliet* with my dad; Juliet did not finish her costume change in time, and the stage manager stopped the play and came out to fasten her nightgown. The man in black's power to stop a whole world amazed me. I first appeared on stage as a munchkin in *The Wizard of Oz* at eight years old. I studied theatre throughout high school and college, focusing my attention on the many opportunities backstage, in directing, stage management, design, and shop work. Outside of school I stage-managed for an assortment of theatres, designed sets, ran a box office for an Off-Broadway magic show, and worked as a production manager – all in New York, San Francisco, and Los Angeles. When applying for graduate schools to obtain my Masters of Fine Arts in Theatre, I chose Louisiana State University's Properties Technology program. A Prop Master is the jack-of-all-trades of the theatre world. They are experts in a wide variety of very specific areas of interest, from creating a realistic knife to spray blood to restoring furniture to creating an edible meal for six onstage using a microwave and a teapot. I selected Properties for my graduate focus because of the variety of skills and techniques that I would learn in the field.

Recently I restored an old armchair for a class project in Props. I began by cleaning the chair, vacuuming up the dust and debris, and washing the wood with water. I removed all of the old staples and nails from the frame. I then inspected the armature and determined which were the weak joints. I cut two replacement pieces for the bottom of the chair frame and shaped them by sanding. I made new dowels, held the chair with clamps, and glued it together. I stripped off several layers of the old paint and then sealed the entire chair with four coats of stain and finish. Once the frame was secure and painted, I began the reupholster process. I estimated the yardage of batting and foam to cover the chair using a how-to manual, the old pieces of fabric, and a tape measure. I cut the first layers of foam and batting and hand-sewed them to the chair springs so that the material would not slip. I sandwiched layers of insulation between progressively lighter cotton fabrics, sewing each new layer around the springs. I nailed and stapled the fabric in place, pulling it tight to remove wrinkles in the lower layers. I finished the chair with a top fabric, taking care with the corners and the armholes to insure a clean finish. I nailed in decorative tacks onto the fabric piece that covers the back of the chair so that no rough, unsewn edges show. For the entire process, I needed a thorough understanding of woodworking, joinery, glues, stains, removers, cleaning, brush care, gravity, chemistry, hand-stitching, geometry, budgeting both time and materials, furniture styles, and a critical artistic eye. I have also studied metalworking, painting, drawing,

Figure 2: Chair at start

Figure 3: Chair at end

historical styles and the evolution of design, cooking, sewing, dying, foam-carving, rigging, handwriting forgery, weaponry, and picked up a plethora of tips and shortcuts working with different materials.

Upon completing the Props program at LSU, I feel confident that I can work in many fields other than theatre. The marketable skills of a theatrical prop master translate to many opportunities and disciplines. Creating an imagined world with realistic conditions extends to film and television, to Vegas casinos and Disneyworld, to returning to the American roots of actually producing goods by building and selling hand-made furniture. I can create high art in the form of sets for the Metropolitan Opera in New York City, or the low-brow spectacle of a miniature New York in the desert of Las Vegas. New Orleans, Louisiana has a rich cultural history of public spectacle in the form of parades. Spectacle is the effect of the combined sensory elements of storytelling: the costumes, the lighting, the scenery, the props, the sound, and the special effects. Spectacle encompasses both the high art of the intellectual and the aristocracy as opera and theatre, and the low art of the uneducated masses as seen in freak shows and yellow journalism. By combining the practical skills I have learned with my own creative vision, I can craft any kind of world to create spectacle.

I work in theatre for many of the same reasons that I enjoy a good parade: they are both fleeting, temporal activities focused on bringing physical life to a dream world. I chose to create my own Mardi Gras float in honor of that spontaneity, imagination, and my favorite part of theatre – spectacle. In this document, I will outline the evolution of Carnival and the celebration of Mardi Gras in New Orleans. I will compare the guilds of Medieval Theatre who built pageant wagons with the Krewes of New Orleans and discuss the use of spectacle in storytelling. In the second half of this thesis, I will detail my experience interning for Blaine Kern Studios, builder of floats. Then I describe the production process of building and parading my own float in the Box of Wine parade of 2011.

In the theatre, every play has a spine – a word or phrase that captures the essence of the story the director wants to tell. Every element in the production reflects this phrase, from a character's personal arc to the set design creating the world of the play. I believe that a city, like a play, exhibits a spine, a signature concept influenced by sociological and geographic factors. In order to find the spine of a play you have to immerse yourself in the play to uncover its secrets and find the roadmap and landmarks. Living in a city for an extended period of time gives you a look into the city's deeper psyche, a chance to see its moods in times of great stress or eerie quiet, to watch how the city changes with the seasons and throughout the day. In the same way that a casual reader of a play will find a trite spine, a tourist does not see the authentic nature of a city without forcing himself off the tourist track and into the wilderness of a city and its people. As part of a society, the citizens of a city share common traits influenced by the weather, the landscape, common obstacles, and pleasures. I developed this theory of cities and their spines while driving across the country, leaving one place for another. I have driven cross-country numerous times, and lived in New York, San Francisco, and Los Angeles. In the time I lived in both San Francisco and Los Angeles, New Orleans was my personal Shangri-La vacation spot, and I went every chance I could.

New York City conjures iconic images of the hustle and bustle of Downtown, men in expensive suits rushing to make more money, the bright lights and neon of Times Square, and myriad cultures packed onto a small island with nowhere to build but up. New York's spine is the *Next*: living in fast-forward while searching for the next big thing. New Yorkers are obsessed with the hottest restaurant, movie, club, and political scandal of the moment. If it is not happening in New York, then it is not happening at all because everything happens there. The city itself gives off

an unceasing amount of stimuli created by the enormous population, which drives and speeds up the city's drumbeat pulse. Everything is a possibility in this city of millions. Even New York City's clichés stress its endless possibilities, but also its fleeting nature – "in a New York minute" or "if you can make it there, you can make it anywhere." New York encapsulates speed, competition, and a desire to be first. A recent article in the *New York Times* Theatre section stating that a play reading is the new way to see a show before anyone else begins,

> New Yorkers love nothing more than to boast, "I was there first," whether it's getting a reservation at a buzzworthy restaurant, snatching up the latest handbag or seeing a new film before the rest of the country. That same quest extends to the theater. Seeing a show before it hits the big time is the stuff of legend (or of tales told by people who weren't actually there). Anyone who was at the first performance of "A Chorus Line" or "Rent" — to name just two shows that started small and ended up conquering Broadway — has real bragging rights.[1]

It is not enough to see a new play before your friends and neighbors. Now you need to see a play before it has even been produced and fully formed. New York City has three major daily newspapers, the *New York Post*, the *Daily News*, and the *New York Times*. Each paper has a distinct demographic: the right-wing Murdoch Post, the tabloid News, and the liberal-elite Times. Even though it is the most populated city in the United States and houses over eight million people, can it really create enough news to fill three papers, or does the city need that much reassurance that it is indeed the center of the universe? The competing newspapers add to New York's noise.

New York City is a city of superlatives. The Empire State building was once the tallest building and the first built over one hundred stories. The tickertape running in Times Square provides a minute-by-minute, real-time account of the city's financial standing. In Union Square a public art installation entitled *Metronome* takes up the face of the building. It includes an LED clock that displays the time down to the hundredth of a second, underscoring the beat of the city.[2] The blur of the hundredth of a second insists that time truly is flying.

Figure 4: *Metronome*

Thousands flock to the city each year in hopes of "making it" in their chosen field, be it as a Broadway actress, a fashion model, or a Wall Street whiz kid. They are driven to compete, and competition is paramount. Success is measured not only in the proficiency of work, but also in your distance from the city itself. Those that left Manhattan's exorbitant rents for Brooklyn qualify their location by how many stops on the train from the city to their home. The L runs along 14th Street in Manhattan starting at 8th Avenue all the way to Canarsie, Brooklyn. The first stop in Brooklyn along the L, Bedford Avenue, was the most posh when I lived there, as it was the hub of the fashionable hipster neighborhood, Williamsburg. The location's desirability diminished with each subsequent stop on the L train – if you could not actually live in Manhattan, then it was important to be the first into the newest, popular, gentrified neighborhood. The nexus of the city moves from the Lower East Side to Chelsea to Williamsburg to Hell's Kitchen driven by an invisible undercurrent of searching

[1] Erik Piepenburg, "Hey Kids, Let's Put on a Reading!," *New York Times*, January 20, 2011.
[2] *Metronome*. Atomic Clock overlooking Union Square, New York City. The time displayed (195641188180304) is currently: 7:56pm and 41.1 seconds with 4 hours 3 minutes and 18.8 seconds left in the day. David Shankbone at en.wikipedia. Republished under CC-BY-SA-2.5.

for the next big thing. It is not enough to be good but to be first; in the same way that you will push your way onto a full subway car, you step over your rivals to reach your destination. As the city promises that anything may happen, it also promises that it will not last, leaving its population scurrying to find what is next so they may stay on top. You may reach the top, but that success is temporary, as someone else is ready to claw his way over you.

San Francisco is the second most densely populated city in the United States, after New York.[3] Externally, San Francisco and New York share similar characteristics: while not an island, San Francisco occupies a seven-mile by seven-mile peninsula and is surrounded by the Pacific Ocean and the Bay on three sides. Both were built as port cities, which contributed to the collection of different cultural groups comprising ethnic neighborhoods; both have a Chinatown where sellers hawk the same knock-off designer purses. Unlike New Yorkers looking for the *Next*, San Franciscans strive for the *Ideal*. The city itself is physically stunning in a way that New York is not. The natural geography predominately features hills at the peaks of which the city opens up and is fully accessible. The fog rolls in carrying a slightly salty taste, powered by the Pacific Ocean meeting the moist cool air from Lake Tahoe. The fog alternately hides and reveals the city in kaleidoscopic patterns. It softens the eye and makes San Franciscans grateful for the sun. The city's natural beauty, open views, and liberal politics allow its citizens the space to imagine the best that humanity can achieve.

San Francisco has a history of being the vanguard of the growth of the human spirit and of social activism. San Francisco is for the dreamers, built by men looking for gold and connected to the outside world by visionaries building the longest suspension bridge at the time (a feat both functional and beautiful). The charter creating the United Nations was signed there in 1945, as was the Treaty of San Francisco that ended the war with Japan in 1951. In the 1960s, the city served as the epicenter of the counterculture movement. From Allen Ginsberg reading *Howl* aloud at the City Lights Bookstore to Janis Joplin and the Grateful Dead living at Haight-Ashbury, the hippie children looking for free love flocked to San Francisco and found an open city. Dotted by the ubiquitous rainbow flags and leather bars, the Castro is the largest predominately gay neighborhood in the United States, and it was home to Harvey Milk, the first openly gay man elected to public office in 1977. San Franciscans believe they can embody the ideal of the human spirit: environmentally conscious, politically active, socially diverse, tolerant, and accepting.

Moving down South to the Third Coast, New Orleans is also a port city enveloped by water, from the mouth of the Mississippi River to Lake Pontchartrain. The city itself is flat, like New York, but much more connected to the land and to nature's power than New York or San Francisco. I believe that New Orleans is a city about *Death and Rebirth*, about knowing that the worst can happen, and will. However, the next morning, the sun will rise and the waters will recede. Life will continue, whether the storm is named Camille in 1969 or Katrina in 2005. In the meantime, its citizens indulge in the pleasures of the flesh and the spirit – eating, drinking, parading, and taking the time to talk to loved ones and strangers alike on the front porch or in the grocery store. It is in the "however," in the space between life and death, in waiting for the good to follow the bad, which drives the celebrations of New Orleans. In Robert Tallant's book *Mardi Gras*, he addresses the character of those living in the Big Easy:

> "When do people work?" [visitors] sometimes ask. The answer is that people work in New Orleans as much as they do elsewhere, but that work is not the whole of their lives, as it too often seems to be to Americans elsewhere. It is a necessity. With work they buy the time and the money for the more pleasurable things of life. Orleanians,

[3] After New York City, only for cities with greater than 200,000 population. Otherwise, it is not 2nd. "2000 Census: US Municipalities Over 50,000: Ranked by 2000 Density". http://www.demographia.com/db-2000city50kdens.htm. 2001.

> in general, have an instinct for the enjoyment of life that is rare in other parts of the country. This is the core, the real secret, that makes the city different from any other in the nation.[4]

The trappings of death literally surround the city. New Orleans traditionally inters its citizens above ground, making them visible to those still living as they go about their daily business. Popular mythology claims that bodies are buried in tombs above ground because the water table is so high that the coffins float to the surface. In reality, the cemeteries are following the Spanish tradition of entombing their guests above ground, reflecting the city's Spanish rulers after the French gave Spain Louisiana in the Treaty of Paris in 1763. Traditional jazz funerals still occur in the city, along with the accompanying Second Lines. A Second Line is a parade of loved ones following the deceased's body to the cemetery accompanied by somber songs from brass bands. After he is laid to rest, the deceased's family and friends parade again. On the return, the march is joyful, celebrating the man's life through replenishing the human spirit – making a "joyful noise." Orleanians experience heartache and loss, but bookend them with pleasure and parades.

I gradually moved from the more tourist destinations of the French Quarter and Bourbon Street to experiencing local neighborhoods and their more authentic parading and color. Each trip brought a unique experience not likely duplicated anywhere else. I heard a brass band playing and ran outside the house to dance barefoot in the street with a Second Line parade Uptown. In the Mid-City neighborhood on New Year's Eve, the residents drag their dead Christmas trees to the neutral ground (grass median between the streets) and set them on fire. The flames from the bonfire rose more than thirty feet as anarchic and barely-contained drunks ran in a giant circle around the fire. After the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival, an annual ten-day music festival featuring hundreds of local and national musicians, I ate barbeque and danced at a gas station during an impromptu party rather than fight the traffic as everyone left. But my favorite part of each visit was sitting on the back porch, eating delicious rich food, and talking for hours with my friends. As I bounced between New Orleans and Los Angeles, I saw the difference between the two. In Los Angeles, I am always working; even while engaged in social activities, there is still a push of personal promotion through work, of searching for some sort of advancement. In the City of Angels, pleasure is incidental to work; in the City that Care Forgot, pleasure is paramount. When it came time for me to move again, I chose Louisiana in hopes of capturing my personal Shangri-La.

Mardi Gras is certainly the largest and best known of the New Orleans spectacles. Mardi Gras reaches across cultural, political, economic, and racial lines to connect its celebrants with one another. In actuality much more of a family event than *Girls Gone Wild* footage would lead one to believe, Mardi Gras gathers generations together on the streets of their neighborhood, often in the same spot they have held for years. Grandmother watches little kids while Mom passes out snacks and Dad mixes drinks. Granted, Mom may have a beer in one hand and her child on a leash in the other. Families converse in the long periods waiting for the parade to roll. The people you are standing next to become your neighbors, and then your allies, protecting your hard-earned spot from the teenagers that push forward five minutes after the parade finally starts. Mardi Gras is the best representation of current cultural folk spectacle created for and enjoyed by the masses: the "Greatest Free Show on Earth."

On Sunday, February 14, 2010, I experienced a Mardi Gras miracle. I stayed Uptown with friends in the days before Fat Tuesday, Mardi Gras day. Over coffee, we discussed our plans for the day and how to counteract the locals' obstacles maneuvering through the city during Carnival season. My friend's husband is a chef at a popular Cajun French restaurant on St. Charles Avenue.

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[4] Robert Tallant, *Mardi Gras*. (Garden City, New York: Doubleday Company Inc., 1948.) 8.

His restaurant erects a viewing stand on the street during Carnival offering diners a delicious meal, an elevated spot to catch beads, and easy access to a bar and a bathroom, all for a price. For him, Mardi Gras is not about throws and costumes but about endless orders coming off the line, missed reservations from tourists who double-book themselves at restaurants across the city, and eighteen hours a day standing in a hot kitchen, all to capture a share of the millions of tourism dollars that are made during Carnival.

On a normal Tuesday, navigating New Orleans can be difficult. The city streets follow the course of the river and locals do not use cardinal directions. They refer to "Lake-side" or "River-side" (Lake Pontchartrain buffering the north of the city and the Mississippi River running to the south); "Uptown" and "Downtown" refer to upriver and downriver, necessitating that one know the river's location and where it flows at all times. During the weeks before Fat Tuesday, many streets are closed for the parade routes preventing any access to the other side of the city by car; parking is non-existent. The chef needed to go to work, and my friend needed to retrieve her costume kit before marching with the Cameltoe Lady Steppers, an all female walking group that parades with Muses on Thursday night before Fat Tuesday.

We piled into one car and dropped the chef off a few blocks from his restaurant with his bike for his return home. My friend and I set off on our errands. Our adventure involved a three-hour detour to East New Orleans for a daiquiri, a parking violation from a very mean meter maid during an unsuccessful attempt to retrieve the bag, and an argument over the last legal parking spot with a man who insisted he was holding said spot for Jesus. In exchange for letting us park, we bought the man a beer at a local bar; having completed a social contract, we were free to join the revelry. We were headed to a house party to watch the Krewe of Bacchus parade, but outside the door of a bar was a small homemade float featuring four trees, each decorated as one of the four seasons. Young people in costume gathered outside the bar, and I wanted to stop to look at the float. We ran into people we knew as the crowd grew larger. The crowd wore elaborate costumes, including a shirtless man in goat pants with his curly hair teased into two horns, people with red beans and rice hot glued to their clothing, and lots of red sequins and sparkles celebrating both Valentine's Day and the Chinese New Year.

Figure 5: Box of Wine parade 2010

We had unwittingly wandered into the meeting point for the Box of Wine parade, a little unofficial walking parade that marches before the Krewe of Bacchus. The Box of Wine theme that year was the "Marriage of Mars and Venus"; the gossip in the street was that Mars and Venus were supposed to get married that day but had gotten into an argument earlier that weekend and were not currently speaking. The Box of Wine celebrants included the Panorama Brass Band, the Noisician Coalitions, DioNiceAss and the Pony Girls, Krewe do Craft, and the Extraordinary League of

Superfoods, all locals dressed in elaborate, handmade costumes.[5] My friend and I were already dressed in costumes, appropriately outfitted in lots of red and tulle and we decided to march with the revelers until we reached the house party that was our original destination. Organizers passed out boxes of wine to dispense to the people waiting for the Krewe of Bacchus parade to start. We danced behind the Noisician Coalitions who play improvised percussion instruments made from garbage cans, bullhorns, washtubs, bike horns, water bottles, bells, dog bowls, and piping. Current TV describes the Noisician Coalition as dressed like a "post-apocalyptic Communist clown army" that sounds like "a marching band side-rolling over an embankment into an oncoming police car, but in a good way."[6] The Box of Wine parade is always free to those who watch and those who participate with a focus on creating a homemade, recycled element to Mardi Gras. That day, the Box of Wine parade gave me a Mardi Gras miracle; after all of the hurdles that New Orleans put in my way, the city will turn around and bestow a gift of spontaneous celebration – the joy inherent in the space between life and death. Joining an old-line krewe typically takes both social connections and a lot of cash, but I got to march in a parade just by wandering by the right place at the right time.

Like my transaction with the old man and the parking spot, a gift of spontaneous parading needs some form of repayment equal in value. I wanted to repay that gift of celebration by building my own Mardi Gras float. It is not enough to enjoy the pretty spectacle and the party; I wanted to learn the historical traditions and techniques from the masters. Float building is an apprenticeship trade like those of the guilds during the Middle Ages. New Orleans has several businesses that build floats, and the largest and most prolific is Blaine Kern's Mardi Gras World. Kern builds most of the floats seen during Mardi Gras. I contacted the art department and secured an internship with them for the fall of 2010. I worked in the prop shop that builds all of the sculptures for the floats and received an in-depth education on the process of building a float, from sculpting to paper-mâchéing and painting. I learned about the business of Mardi Gras through the parallel tracks of academic research on the historical origins, and hands-on experience with Blaine Kern in physically creating the floats. I wanted to build my own small float to synthesize the information I gathered. Theatre is never purely academic; we learn through the process of physically bringing to life an imagined world. I wanted to honor the gift that Box of Wine gave me by creating my own float to walk in that parade. I found an interview online with the parade coordinator, Ann Marie Coviello, and contacted her through Facebook. I explained the float project to her, and she gave me permission to join the 2011 Box of Wine parade.

I learn by taking things apart, by actually performing each step of the process; through that, I actually develop a full understanding of the method, knowing both the how and why. These perceptions allow me a greater understanding and the ability to apply the knowledge of one technique to another material. The cumulative nature of props instruction developed a strong knowledge base across many subjects and techniques. I combined my personal search for catharsis, of understanding my growth during my academic instruction, with my desire to showcase the breadth of the skills I have acquired, into my thesis. By producing my own Mardi Gras float, I gained a full insight into the construction and presentation of parading.

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[5] Box of Wine Parade News Release, http://www.neworleans.com/community/locals-area-news-releases/329801-box-of-wine-parade-2010.html. Sunday, February 14, 2010.

[6] Current TV interviews Mattvaughn Black, Noisician Coalition founder. http://current.com/entertainment/music/87179421_the-noisician-coalition.htm. November 12, 2007.

Chapter 2: The Evolution of Carnival

Springtime Celebrations of Catharsis and Spectacle

Many cultural mythologies share a common springtime ritual wherein sacrifice brings catharsis, stemming from our beginnings as an agricultural society. Man makes a sacrifice of flesh in order to nurture the earth, which blesses the believer with gifts, be they plentiful harvests or personal salvation. The spirit of a community mimics the renewal of the earth as winter ends and spring's natural bounty begins. These rituals of sacrifice and catharsis publicly and symbolically celebrate fertility – of the earth, of the food supply, and of women.[7] Tallant describes the motivation behind man's spring sacrifice for his gods thusly:

> The old gods of storm and thunder and darkness, of punishment and pain and death, had inspired only terror. Here were positive gods, good gods, who might give mean life. Winter, dreaded in the colder regions of the earth when life was precarious during its season and death from starvation was always imminent, was gone. Spring was new birth. It was indeed a time for rejoicing and for hope, a time for carnival. Then it must not have a feast before a fast, but rather the beginning of feasting, after a lean and hungry winter.[8]

Protected by the anonymous security that being part of a group brings, man can indulge in the fruits of the body – sex, drugs, and violence. He temporarily destroys the natural outside order to release internal personal pressure. Society as a whole can then fully embrace the values of order that it needs to flourish. Through excess and the destruction of social order, man can purify himself of sin. Every renewal ritual obliquely refers to death. How can we renew without first having loss?

In *Poetics* Aristotle sets forth his definition of tragedy. Along with outlining his rules on action, language, and artistic ornament, he states that tragedy includes catharsis, a response of fear and pity that allows both the characters onstage and the audience an emotional cleansing.[9] By either experiencing suffering first hand or by watching an imitation of suffering, the audience can have a healthy outlet for these feelings of fear and pity. Historians disagree on the translation of "tragedy," which blends the Greek words for "goat" and "to sing" into "goat-song," sometimes defined as the singing and dancing *around* the goat or as the dancing *of* the goat. Robert Calasso combines the works of Aristotle and Eratosthenes and says that there is no distinction between the two thoughts:

> "If one wishes to dress up as a satyr [a goat], one first has to kill a goat and skin it." Eratosthenes and Aristotle were saying the same thing, except that Aristotle omits the first and decisive part of the process: the slaying of the goat. . . an extremely concise definition of the process from which tragedy developed [is that] there are three phases: Icarius kills the goat; Icarius skins the goat and stretches part of the pelt into a wineskin; Icarius and his friends dance around the goat and stamp on the wineskin while wearing strips of the pelt.[10]

Catharsis requires sacrifice, recognition, and revelry. The Greeks celebrated the Festival of Dionysus in Athens every spring. Dionysus was the god of wine, fertility, agriculture, and sexuality, the god of the human wildness that the city of Athens tried to control. The citizens of Athens celebrated Dionysus through a three-day long theatrical festival, during which playwrights presented three new tragedies and one satyr play (a burlesque-like tragicomedy) in a competition. The participants were encouraged to invert the normal social status and release their inhibitions. The

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[7] Tallant, *Mardi Gras*, 83.
[8] Tallant, *Mardi Gras*, 84.
[9] Aristotle, *Poetics*, trans. S. H. Butcher. (Project Gutenberg, 2008.) http://www.gutenberg.org/files/1974/1974-h/1974-h.htm
[10] Robert Calasso. *The Marriage of Cadmus and Harmony*. (New York, Vintage House, 1993). 39-40.

weeklong celebration included public drinking of wine, theatrical spectacle, and religious orgy.[11] The Greeks of Arcadia celebrated a spring festival by sacrificing a goat, eating its flesh, and cutting the skin into whips. The priests, painted with the goat's blood, ran through the streets with the whips, chasing the men and women who were seeking forgiveness.[12] The date of this festival fell around the same time as Mardi Gras.[13] From its origins theatre has been tied to fertility and renewal of the earth and the spirit.

The Romans adapted the Greek ritual into the *Lupercalia*. The celebration on February 15th included purification rites to renew life and vegetation.[14] The ancient Roman church held the festival, in the same way that Mardi Gras is part of the Christian religious calendar.[15] Eventually the rites grew too large for the church. There were not enough priests to perform the *Lupercalia*, so the priests passed out whips to laypeople, who then flayed one another until they felt purification. The festival also combined elements of costuming, public debauchery, cross-dressing, and violence. During the festival, almost all laws were eliminated. The aristocrats mixed with the commoners in the streets as "all social barriers were down, and slave and freedman, patrician and pauper, ran riot in the streets of Rome, hand in hand."[16] A day of rest followed the day of uninhibited debauchery. On the following day, the people paraded. Oxen drew wagons with images of the gods to the river, as the wealthy and the poor marched behind. The priests bathed the gods and the beasts in the river, and everyone marched back into the city, completing the cycle of excess, rest and reflection, and celebration.

As the Christian Church rose in prominence and tried to strip the population of "feasting, fornication, and fun"[17], the *Lupercalia* fell out of fashion. In order to smooth the transition from the old pagan rites to the Christian holidays, the Church kept the times of celebration similar, although reassigning a Christian name and Christian significance. *Lupercalia* became *Carnevale*, or "farewell to the flesh." Pope Gregory XIII set the Gregorian calendar in the 16th century to calculate the date of Easter, making it the central feast in the liturgical calendar. We use the Gregorian calendar still; Ash Wednesday is the first day of Lent and forty days before Easter Sunday, or Resurrection Day. After the believer prepares by fasting and denial, he can be resurrected. Pope Gregory also formally established the day before as Shrove Tuesday, the climax of three days of feasting and celebration, of excess before the sacrifice of fasting during the Lenten season. Throughout Man's history, he has changed the name of his springtime celebration, but the twin threads of sacrifice and catharsis remained.

The Marriage of Church and the Theatre in the Middle Ages

The theatre of the Middle Ages was profoundly religious. The Christian Church abolished most forms of secular theatre, including travelling troupes and itinerant performers. Theatre's reputation was not positive with the general population, and shared a close association with thieves and whores. The Church abolished secular theatre but used theatrical conventions to entertain and educate its audience. The clergy built stained glass windows pictorializing biblical stories, surrounding the parishioners with images of Christ's life. By adding elements of performance and spectacle to religious ceremony, the clergy brought the bible stories to physical life. In making the

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[11] Robert Cohen. *Theatre*. (Palo Alto, CA, Mayfield Publishing Company, 1981). 47.
[12] Henri Schindler. *Mardi Gras: New Orleans*. (Paris, Flammarion, 1997). 10.
[13] Tallant, *Mardi Gras*, 84.
[14] Max S. Shapiro. *Mythologies of the World: A Concise Encyclopedia*. (Garden City, NY, Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1979.) 114.
[15] Tallant, *Mardi Gras*, 85.
[16] Tallant, *Mardi Gras*, 87.
[17] Tallant, *Mardi Gras*, 88.

life of Christ immediate and visual, it became attainable. Using simple transitive logic, if Christ had a mother and walked the earth, and I have a mother and walk the earth, then I can lead a Christ-like life. Mass was said in Latin but most of the populace could not read or speak it. By using costumes, props, and acting, the clergy helped bridge understanding with the congregation of the stories of the Bible. The clergy used the very theatrical methods they had abolished in the secular world to reach the masses.

The *Quem Quertis* is a trope performed during Easter Mass that celebrates the visit of the three Marys to the tomb of Christ. They meet an angel who tells them that Christ has risen. These few lines provide a plot, conflict, resolution, characters, and dialogue, all essential elements for the theatre. In 980, the Bishop of England wrote the *Concordia Rugularis*, a document governing all English church procedures. It outlined detailed instructions for performing the *Quem Quertis* for Easter Mass. The script called for costumes, props, acting, sound, and furniture, and dictates exactly how the drama should be performed.

> While the third lesson is being chanted, let four brethren vest themselves. Let one of these, vested in an alb, enter as though to take part in the service, and let him approach the sepulchre without attracting attention and sit there quietly with a palm in his hand. While the third respond is chanted, let the remaining three follow, and let them all, vested in copes, bearing in their hands thuribles with incense, and stepping delicately as those who seek something, approach the sepulchre.[18]

Not only did the Church approve of using theatre to entertain and educate its audience, but it also standardized the artistic treatment of the play, in effect affirming the importance of spectacle to storytelling. The churches were universally decorated with statuary and stained glass depicting bible stories in order to reach the congregation. With this standardization from the Catholic Church,

> Three developments are likely to follow: the original ceremony may be embellished and expanded, similar ceremonies modeled on it may legitimately figure in the liturgies for other festivals, and the individuals responsible for creating them may develop a technical awareness of what they are actually doing. The imitative aspect of the ceremony may thus come to posses an importance of its own, artistic rather than strictly religious. Proof exists that all three of these developments overtook liturgical music drama in the course of the eleventh century.[19]

The Church added additional dialogue to the *Quem Quertis* in the common languages of English, Flemish, and German, or those of the parishioners. New scenes leading up to the Resurrection were included in the program. As the script developed, so did its theatrical nature. The staging increased as it moved beyond the altar and into the rest of the church, using the church's alcoves and naves as different stages. The performance's art and entertainment values outgrew the liturgical drama, outgrew the capabilities of the clergy, outgrew the church architecture; in short: outgrew the church itself.

Theatre plus Church plus Commerce Brings Spectacle

As the Church's theatrical programs increased in size, scope, and popularity, they moved out of the churches and into the streets. The city fathers saw an opportunity to host the liturgical dramas as the performances drew farmers and people from outside the town. In mixing the popular religious events with the local merchants and artists, the fathers brought together celebration, civic pride, and commerce. The residents and tourists enjoyed the festivities. Tourism boosted the economy during the performance season. The community of guilds, municipal government, civic brotherhoods, and

[18] Cohen, *Theatre*. 96.
[19] Cohen, *Theatre*. 97.

religious associations united at the intersection between "faith and commerce, ritual and entertainment, devotion and artistry, salvation and society."[20] A cycle play was a religious festival and a tourist attraction, creating a community theatre that bonded the participants with the audience. This meeting provided the artistic and economic growth to sustain religious theatrical devices all over Europe.

Medieval Theatre told the stories of the Old and New Testament. Each town had its own cycle of plays. The cycle had a larger theme, and each wagon or mansion (temporary stage) told a smaller story within the larger context. The cycle plays of England were the first plays written in the English language; the scenes were also the first to be played on rolling wagons. The audience stayed stationary, and the parade stopped at several pre-arranged stations and presented a scene at each. One of the best-documented cycle plays are the York Corpus Christi ("body of Christ") festival in York, England. Most of the written text still exists, along with the guild records of the time that document the production process and incurred expenses. The York Cycle was held on Corpus Christi day, the Thursday after Trinity Sunday, which usually falls between late May and June. The York cycle was performed in the late-1300s through the 1500s. The town government sponsored the cycle. Guilds – associated craftsmen in a particular trade and comprised of the professional middle class – each funded a scene in the cycle, called a pageant. The guilds raised the funds necessary to build the wagon, costumes, props, and set pieces. They built the wagon, the sets, the costumes, and they performed in the pageant. Often the guild's trade related to their assigned scene. The Shipwrights presented the Building of the Ark; the Grooms performed the Flight into Egypt; the Bakers staged the Last Supper. They used their professional, artistic skills to create profitable entertainment.

The York Cycle consists of forty-eight different pageants, and the cycle took the entire day to complete. The pageants would stop and perform at twelve to sixteen different stations along the parade route.[21] The cycle began as the sun rose; the Tanners (tanning leather and hides) presented the Creation and the fall of the angels at the first station. Upon finishing, they would move to the second station and perform again as the Plasterers began the second pageant, the Creation, at the first station. As each scene was completed, it would move down the parade route until there were performances at every single station. The audience could set up camp at one station and see the parade and the play in its entirety; the winding city streets isolated each station creating an intimate environment. Because of

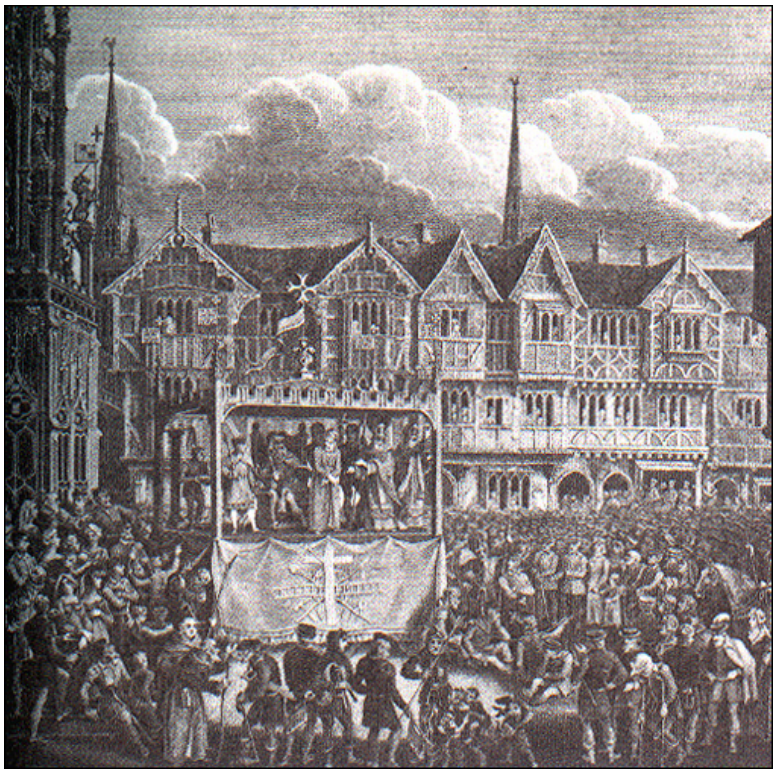

Figure 6: Medieval Pageant Wagon

[20] Cohen, *Theatre*. 97.
[21] Richard Beadle and Alan J. Fletcher. *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Theatre, Second Edition*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2008). 27.

the multiple staging areas, the parade could reach an astonishingly large audience while still creating immediate, personal rapport.

As different guilds performed each pageant, many actors shared the main roles. In the York cycle, at least twenty-two actors played the role of Jesus Christ.[22] This division of labor prevented any one actor from being identified with a particular role. Johnny Depp is always Johnny Depp, whether he is playing a pirate, a mad hatter, or a tourist because his star power outshines any role he takes on. But a character actor like John C. Reilly is able to lose himself in a part. Reilly has appeared in over fifty films, including three of 2002's Oscar nominees for Best Picture: *Chicago, Gangs of New York*, and *The Hours*. But to be a star, an actor must be recognized within and beyond a specific role. The Medieval audience understood the actors as images that represented their role, not as the actor inhabiting the role. As the characters are traditional and part of a recognizable story, there was not much character development. The audience does not need to know why Thomas does not believe that Christ rose from the dead; they already know that he is Doubting Thomas. The acting performance merely required a general characterization and a powerful speaking voice to reach the audience while in an outdoor venue.

While the civic government of York organized the entire event, each guild staged a pageant. The wagons were elaborate and expensive to construct and maintain. Each guild owned or rented their wagon; those that owned their wagon also had to pay for housing the wagons during the year. Looking at the artistry of the cathedrals built at the time can give an idea of the probable intricate detail of the pageant wagons. The wagons advertised the prosperity and skill of the guilds that sponsored them, which likely encouraged some competition to outdo the previous years and the other guilds. Illustrations from the time-period depict a rolling wagon pulled by animals, a playing space, and some sort of structure depicting the scene. The scene house could be two or even three stories tall and also housed a retiring room, or dressing room. Many incorporated "secrets," or special effects like trapdoors, cranes to lift an actor above the audience, or the use of pyrotechnics representing hell. Each wagon was a miniature rolling theatre house. Craftsmen built the wagons; natural competition between the guilds led to spectacular effects as they tried to outdo themselves and one another. Each guild's specialty was incorporated into the assignment of the playlets. The grandiose celebration joined the population in religious and artistic growth and created a resonant, theatrical tradition.

[22] Beadle, *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Theatre, Second Edition*. 32.

Chapter 3: Mardi Gras in New Orleans

The Creole Influence

The beginning of the Carnival season varies from year to year; in New Orleans, Carnival begins on Twelfth Night (the end of the Epiphany season or January 5th), gathers steam through January and February, and culminates with Mardi Gras day, or Fat Tuesday, usually occurring in February or early March. Today's Mardi Gras in New Orleans shares similar seasonal, agricultural, and religious roots with the Festival of Dionysus, the *Lupercalia*, and the European *Carnevale*, but "more grandly, as something universally human, parallel in both its nature-oriented and socially-oriented customs to rituals practiced in all times and places."[23] However, Mardi Gras connects most powerfully with its precedents in its true spirit of reversing the everyday life with fantasy, of subverting the public norm to find catharsis.

But how did an American city continue the traditions of the grand Carnival celebrations of Europe? The first roots of the New Orleans Mardi Gras can be found in the Carnival celebrations in Paris during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.[24] Louis XIV and Louis the XV left a legacy of opulent masquerades and patronage of the arts. The elite society held private masked balls and banquets. The guilds marched through the streets, including the butchers who paraded a fattened ox, or *boeuf gras*. Crowds filled the streets in costume, paraded, and ate and drank. The costumes were elaborate, fantastical, and often satiric of the current social and political climate. Up to 1850, the Paris Carnival offered four days of street masking and public masked balls.

On Shrove Tuesday, or Fat Tuesday, in 1699, the French-Canadian Lord Iberville and his party stopped to rest on a small bayou twelve miles up the Mississippi River. "The weary, homesick men must have recalled that back home in France maskers were filling the streets, for before they moved on, Iberville named the stream Bayou Mardi Gras."[25] In the next twenty years, his brother Bienville, Governor of Louisiana, moved the capital from his settlement in Mobile, Alabama to New Orleans. Ten years after Bienville's death, the governor Marquis de Vaudriel brought a dancing master from Paris to "assist him in the conversion of the wilderness into civilization."[26] He instructed the eight hundred white Creole men living in New Orleans in 1745 in the arts of dancing and the proper conduct for a gentleman at a ball, skills not necessary for farming or surviving in the wilderness. Creoles were French who later intermarried with the Spanish and constructed an insular society with a complex caste system and cherished a fanciful obsession with courtly behavior. The earliest Carnival celebrations in this fledgling city combined the private masked balls of Paris and the lawlessness and licentious behavior of the general public as seen during the *Lupercalia*.

After the Louisiana Purchase of 1803, Anglo-Saxon and Protestant Americans poured into the city, bringing with them new money and a lifestyle at odds with the established Catholic Creoles at every turn.

> The Creoles found them crude and bad-mannered and mercenary. As a whole the dislike was mutual. The Americans did not approve of the Creole way of life at all. There is indeed no more resemblance between this completely Latin city of New Orleans and that of any on the New England seaboard than there is between granite and velvet. Here was a warm and luxury-loving people living in a society closed to the Americans and to all outsiders, a people served by black slave and inordinately devoted to the ball, the theatre, the opera, the promenade, who place an unseemly

[23] Samuel Kinser, *Carnival, American Style*. (Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1990). 6.
[24] Kinser, *Carnival, American Style*. 8.
[25] Tallant, *Mardi Gras*, 96.
[26] Kinser, *Carnival: American Style*. 17.

> degree of importance upon fine food, fine liquor, fine manners. The Americans thought the Creoles superficial and hypocritical... Life was a continuous round of amusement, even for those who could not afford it. Whenever possible there was a party. On the slightest excuse there was a parade. New England thought New Orleans reeked with sin.[27]

The Creoles retreated into their insular society, and it was the Americans who continued the Carnival traditions. They formalized the season into a highly stylized schedule of debutant balls and street parading, mimicking and mocking the Creole's imitation of aristocracy.

Mardi Gras Krewes

The first officially organized celebrant of Mardi Gras in New Orleans was the Mistick Krewe of Comus, founded by six Anglo-American businessmen in 1857 inspired by the Cowbellian Society of Mobile, Alabama. In Greek mythology, Comus was the son and cupbearer for Bacchus, the god of wine and revelry. The Cowbellians consisted of a group of young businessmen who presented tableaus, a parade, and held a masked ball on New Year's Eve. Some of the Cowbellians came to New Orleans for Mardi Gras in 1837 and 1838 and inspired the founder of the Mistick Krewe of Comus. Like the Cowbellians, the founding members of the Mistick Krewe of Comus were Anglo-American, not Creole. The Krewe of Comus was a secret society from the Protestant elite of New Orleans who transformed the wild carnival celebrations into an artistic, organized parade. They built the first floats, two rolling wagons that depicted the god Comus and then Satan. The early float chassis was a wooden wagon with steel-rimmed wheels pulled by teams of mules dressed in white robes.[28] The riders wore masks and heavily decorated costumes to conceal their identity. Elaborate paper-mâché creations lavishly decorated the floats. Comus paraded at night and introduced the flambeaux, fueled torches to illuminate their intricate designs.

> Comus introduced spectacle to the streets of New Orleans, and Carnival was forever changed. Comus would not only reappear every Mardi Gras night; he would do so amid the flames and smoking flares of moving theatre, and each year he would present new visions to astonish a population long nourished on masquerades, parades, and stagecraft.[29]

Charles Britton was one of the earliest art directors for the Krewe of Comus parade. Britton created elaborate and politically satirical tableaus for the yearly ball. In 1872, New Orleans was in the midst of the Reconstruction after the Civil War and supervised by military governors. The election that year resulted in opposing legislatures and two governors: Democrat John McEnery and the Republican William Pitt Kellogg. That year the Mistick Krewe of Comus staged "The Missing Links to Darwin's Origin of Species." The Krewe walked on foot inside giant paper-mâché animal costumes that resembled local and national figures and politicians, mocking the Republican with thinly disguised satire. The Tobacco grub wore the face of Ulysses S. Grant, complete with cigar; the Snail and Leech represented members of the Louisiana legislature; the Bloodhound was the police chief. The final tableau depicted a traditional Louisiana plantation with all of the animals arranged on a large staircase. Roach describes the scene thusly:

> This taxonomy, arranged by phyla in a periodic version of "survival of the fittest" culminated in the mock crowning of "The Gorilla," a caricature of the Negro lieutenant governor of Louisiana, strumming a banjo with hairy paws, as the "Missing Link of Darwin's Eden." In the tradition of carnivalesque inversion, the

[27] Tallant, *Mardi Gras*, 98.
[28] Schindler, *Mardi Gras, New Orleans*. 10.
[29] Schindler, *Mardi Gras, New Orleans*. 10.

> lowest changed places with the highest… moreover, in each case, carnival emerges as the site where images of violent ridicule may stand in for violent actions.[30]

In September of 1874, many members of Comus took part in the coup known as the Battle of Liberty Place where the Democratic White League fought against the racially integrated Metropolitan police force.[31] They occupied the state house and downtown until federal troops restored the government. Comus was a social gathering but also a powerful behind-the-scenes force in the governing of New Orleans.

Figure 7: Britton's Tobacco Grub

Membership in the Mistick Krewe of Comus was very elite and secretive; the membership roster was never disclosed and admittance to the ball was by invitation only. Comus was open to the general public via the free parade through the city, partially available through the published accounts of the balls and the prestige of its debutantes, and completely closed off through its members-only meetings to select the king and the parade theme. Mardi Gras simultaneously creates an upper class, exclusive environment, and a lowbrow public art represented by the floats and the costumed audience. Membership in the old-line krewes – Comus, Rex, Momus, and Proteus – was limited to elite, white males. The highest honor of Mardi Gras is that of the king of Rex, king of all Carnival, and his was the only identity released, through a photograph in the *Times-Picayune* on Fat Tuesday.[32] True social standing came from the power of the mask, from both guarding historical imperative and demonstrating civic generosity, upheld through the mythological, highbrow parade subject matter.

In the late 1980s, a group of black women and men fought back against the old money, white upper class krewes and social clubs, claiming that the krewe membership discriminated against blacks, Jews, Italians, and other social groups, and thus denied them business opportunities. The Human Relations Committee met and debated the issue. New Orleans is not a city of factories or economic diversity and is dependent on tourism. In 1990, a professor speaking at the city council meeting estimated that Carnival brought in "close to $500 million, of which 80 percent was money from out of state. Carnival produced tax revenue of $27 million to city government and $15 million to the state."[33] The city spent approximately 3 million in additional police and sanitation services. In the end, the ordinance for desegregation passed, and in 1991, the city of New Orleans required social organizations to certify that they did not discriminate based on race, religion, gender, or sexual orientation.[34] Each krewe had to disclose its membership roster to receive a parade permit for

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[30] Joseph Roach, *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance,* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996). 263-265.
[31] Roach, *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance,* 261.
[32] James Gill, *Lords of Misrule: Mardi Gras and the Politics of Race in New Orleans*. (Jackson, Mississippi: University Press of Mississippi, 1997). 7-8.
[33] Gill, *Lords of Misrule: Mardi Gras and the Politics of Race in New Orleans*, 19.
[34] Gill, *Lords of Misrule: Mardi Gras and the Politics of Race in New Orleans*, 4.

the public streets. Rather than identify their members and fully integrate, the Mistick Krewe of Comus disbanded and has not paraded since.

Mardi Gras in the 20th Century

In response to the exclusivity of the old-line krewes, local businessmen founded new krewes during the mid-20th century. In 1968, Blaine Kern and eleven other businessmen founded the Krewe of Bacchus, ushering in the first of the "superkrewes." Bacchus was the Roman equivalent of the Greek god Dionysus. The founders, all local leaders in the hospitality industry that catered to the tourists, realized a way to bring in more revenue during the Mardi Gras season and boost the New Orleans economy. The old-line krewes were only open to the upper class New Orleans social circles; tourists and other outsiders could watch the free parades but never from a parade float. Krewes are non-profit organizations and financed by dues, merchandise, and fund-raisers. In the 1950s, Carnival season was losing its spark, and the founders of the Krewe of Bacchus sought to reignite it by presenting a spectacular parade on the Sunday night before Fat Tuesday. Bacchus further broke with tradition by crowning an unmasked celebrity as king. Past kings of Bacchus include Danny Kaye (1968), Bob Hope (1973), Charlton Heston (1983), Hulk Hogan (2008), and Drew Brees (2010).[35]

Each parade, sponsored by a different krewe, depicts a yearly theme for the parade, which is told through the compilation of all the floats. They tell the stories of mythology from the ancient Greek and Roman, to the present-day mythologies of literature, movies, and current events. Arthur Hardy's Mardi Gras Guide lists forty-nine official Mardi Gras parades for the 2011 season, located in New Orleans proper and the surrounding communities of Gretna, Westbank, and Metairie. The Krewe of Bacchus celebrates the recently opened WWII museum in New Orleans by presenting *Bacchus Salutes America's Greatest Generation*, with floats "WWII Museum," "Medals of Honor" and "Rosie the Riveter."[36] Endymion holds the title as the largest krewe at 2300 members, and sponsors an open ball at the Superdome after they present *Endymion's American Masters* with "Elvis Presley," "Michael Jackson", and "Mark Twain."[37] The irreverent *Tucks: What's Appening* illustrates "Farmville," "Twitter This" and "Lost in Amazon.com."[38] The stately Rex is the oldest remaining krewe in New Orleans since the demise of Comus and closes the festivities on Fat Tuesday; this year *Rex presents This Sceptered Isle* reflecting on Shakespearean references to England, Scotland, and Wales.[39] Some themes are satirical, some reverential; some are kept secret until the day they roll. Each krewe employs an art director who designs every float, and many contract the actual construction of the floats out to a third-party business. The largest of these float-building operations is Blaine Kern's Mardi Gras World.

[35] Krewe of Bacchus website, http://www.kreweofbacchus.org/history.html. 1999.
[36] Arthur Hardy, *Mardi Gras Guide, 35th Annual Edition 2011* (Mandeville, LA: Arthur Hardy Enterprises, Inc. 2010) 153.
[37] Hardy, *Mardi Gras Guide, 35th Annual Edition,* 150.
[38] Hardy, *Mardi Gras Guide, 35th Annual Edition,* 149.
[39] Hardy, *Mardi Gras Guide, 35th Annual Edition,* 155.

Chapter 4: Blaine Kern Studios

Mardi Gras 365 Days a Year

In 1947, Blaine Kern formed Blaine Kern Studios, which presently includes four businesses that build parade floats, manufacture beads, stage parades, and host a living theme park for tourists to experience the craft behind the spectacle.[40] Kern's personal mythology is that of a local boy who painted a mural for a hospital to offset the cost of his mother's medical bills. The captain of the Alla Krewe saw the mural and hired the fourteen year old to design and build the floats for the 1946 parade.[41] Kern's designs caught the attention of the Captain of the Rex Krewe, a wealthy and socially connected businessman who sponsored Kern's artistic growth by subsidizing his trips to Europe to study the Carnival celebrations of France and Italy. In the 1950s Kern built a mechanized King Kong float that held a live girl in its hand. Walt Disney was so impressed he offered Kern a job working for Disney, but Kern chose to honor his patron and stay in New Orleans.

Blaine Kern Studios is a family business; each of Kern's five children works for the company in some form, and his sons Barry and Brian now run the company's daily operations. Many of the employees I met shared a personal connection with the Kern business; including an uncle and a nephew, a mother and daughter, and a man who got his job through his grandmother's friendship with a secretary. When I tried to call Kern Studios for an internship, I could not reach anyone who would help me. However, my teacher's husband's father was marrying one of the five Kern children (a beautiful example of the complicated network of Southern familial relations that usually require a map and a complete genealogy to navigate). Through that contact, I received the correct email address for the art director. The full-time prop shop staff includes the art director, the shop manager, four sculptors, three paper-mâché "glue girls," three painters, and two flower-makers. Kern Studios prop shop also employs several part-time and seasonal employees and a handful of drivers for the forklifts, tractors, and semi-trucks that move the props and floats between the warehouses and the dens (off-site storage units that house the float undercarriages during the off-season).

The prop shop builds float pieces year round in a large warehouse on the Mississippi River. The facility is open every day for tours (excluding Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter, and Fat Tuesday). The gift shop employs several different tour guides; visitors watch a short clip about the history behind Mardi Gras and wander through the exhibit in the gift shop, including completed props and several examples of a Queen's gown and the complicated, beaded Mardi Gras Indian headdresses. The guides pass out beads to each visitor and then take them through the 100,000 square foot warehouse to watch the construction in process. Each sculptor, painter, and paper-mâché artist has a small barricade protecting his workspace from the groups of tourists that stare and take pictures all day long. As he continues working, the tour guide explains the process behind the life of a float. The workshop houses thousands of completed props and over twenty fully dressed floats at a time, and visitors are welcome to explore and take lots of pictures.

Several signature floats ride each year. Kern keeps the floats intact and exhibits them in the warehouse until the parade where they check the floats for damage, repair, modify, or repaint them. A giant bathtub filled with glowing bubbles heralds the Krewe of Muses annually. The Smokey Mary, a train car illuminated by running fiber-optic lights, signals the arrival of the Krewe of Orpheus. The Krewe of Bacchus presents the Bacchagator, a three-piece float over a hundred feet long that debuted in 1986. It was painted white in 1997 in honor of the white alligator on display at

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[40] Interview with Blaine Kern by Patrick J. Sauer, http://patricksauer.com/index.php/People-More-Interesting-than-I/how-i-did-it-blaine-kern-aka-mr-mardi-gras.html

[41] Graham Button, "Like Santa Claus," *Forbes* Vol. 156, Issue 8, October 9 1995.

the New Orleans Aquarium of the Americas; Kern repainted the creature green, how it has remained since.[42]

Making a Mardi Gras Float

The krewe determines the float theme, and the art director designs each of the floats that will make up the parade. He creates a full-color rendering of the side and front view of each float. The prop shop manager breaks down each float into the different elements: the props (large sculptural pieces), the flowers, the typography, and the overall structure of the float itself. He then decides which props must be built from scratch or modified from an existing prop. Kern keeps hundreds of heads and torsos, and they are often swapped out in different combinations to create new characters. For example, instead of making Linda Blair's head from *The Exorcist* brand-new, the sculptor modified Dorothy's head from *The Wizard of Oz*. The sculptor changed the hair from braids to a snaky, curly, tumble of locks, and the prop was repainted.

Figure 8: Dorothy/Linda Blair head

The prop shop also made a soccer player figure, but they did not get a lot of use for a soccer player in the land of Southern football. His feet were remade to look like a Roman soldier for one parade, and then they were transformed into a football player for the Super bowl parade. I assisted on the Mark Twain float for the Krewe of Endymion. The sculptor started with the torso of the *Phantom of the Opera,* with a large flowing shirt and cuffs and a rose in his hand. The sculptor cut off the Phantom's hand at the elbow to remove the rose and reshape it. He cut off the cuffs and added a bowtie in place of the ascot. The sculptor used a forklift to maneuver Twain's head onto the Phantom's torso and repainted the entire piece.

If a brand new prop is needed, the sculptor forms it from styrofoam, the glue girl covers it in paper-mâché, a painter paints it, and then another worker seals the prop. Each of the four sculptors I worked with had a different method of attacking the problem of shaping a three-dimensional object, but the overall elements of an armature and foam body are the same. At first glance, the sculptors' workspaces are cluttered jumbles of pictures and small toys like a ten-year-old boy's bedroom, coated in a fine dusting of foam bits. The sculptors collect action figures, books on human anatomy and art, and three-dimensional models, which all create an in-depth, on-hand research library.

The Krewe of Endymion's *American Masters* parade depicted Walt Disney who held a three-foot tall Mickey Mouse in his hand. The sculptor brought in a three-inch Mickey Mouse doll from the 1930s as his reference point, with a fatter stomach, slimmer face, and bigger shoes than today's Mickey Mouse. He constructed a scale drawing of the Mickey Mouse body on graph paper

[42] Bacchus website

and figured out the proportions of shoes, legs, shorts, torso, arms, and head. Kern buys 4" sheets of styrofoam in bulk, so the sculptor took the paper drawing and divided the figure horizontally into 4" layers and numbered each one. The sculptor scaled the size of each piece and determined each layer's dimension of width and depth (as height is fixed by the styrofoam sheet).

Sometimes when a doll cannot be found but the sculptor needs a detailed three-dimensional model, Kern will commission a maquette. A retired sculptor with Kern will contract maquette work. I saw this process in action for the Charlton Heston as Moses parting the Red Sea for the Cecil B. DeMillle float, affectionately referred to as "Touchdown Moses" by the sculptor. The model maker shaped the figure in clay and then created a negative mold of the clay. The clay is excellent for shaping and forming the detail but cannot withstand the abuse it would receive in the shop. Next, the model maker cast the negative mold with a plastic and mailed it to the prop shop.

The sculptor then took the maquette and sliced it into equal, horizontal layers on the band saw. Then he mounted the entire maquette on a balsa wood frame and numbered each layer. Next he dismantled the whole thing and went into the projection room, a small plywood box with enough wall length to place a new sheet of foam and an overhead projector set to transfer the scale of each slice of the maquette. If each plastic slice of the maquette is ¼" thick, and that equals 4" thick on the foam sheet, then the outline of each slice transfers to the outer dimensions on the styrofoam sheet. However, the prop sculpture is three-dimensional, and the top edge can be further out in space than the bottom edge, and vice versa. He drew the shadow of each slice of the maquette onto the Styrofoam to accommodate all of the outer dimensions. He numbered each piece, marked the centerline of the entire prop, and cut out each piece on the band saw.

The sculptor built a wooden frame for the entire figure, using wood from packing crates, plywood and 2x4 pine: plentiful, lightweight, and inexpensive. The 2x4 is used for more structural, load-bearing areas, while the packing crate wood is primarily used inside the foam. The bottom of each prop is a wooden box that can accommodate a forklift. If the bottom frame is built from metal, then the props is made of fiberglass, as it is a lot heavier than foam. I learned two ways to build the armature and foam shape: frame then foam, and foam then frame. For Mickey Mouse, the sculptor built two wooden leg frames. He carved foam shoes and legs, cut them in half vertically, and then carved out the inside to accommodate the wooden frame. Working up from the feet, he added framing pieces for the torso and the arms, cutting the foam pieces as he assembled the frame. While creating Touchdown Moses, the sculptor glued together all of the foam slices and carved Moses. After he roughed in the general shape and lines, he then cut the entire prop in half vertically, constructed a frame, and reattached Moses around the frame. I asked the two different sculptors why they used that particular method with the different props. Mickey Mouse's sculptor needed an exact size for Mickey's feet so it would fit on Walt Disney's previously constructed hand, so he chose to use the doll reference material and a mathematically based scale drawing to build the sculpture. Moses's flowing robe had a more

Figure 9: Mickey Mouse legs

organic shape, and the sculptor wanted to emphasize the gestural lines in the skirt and torso. Also, Moses held the Ten Commandments over his head, and the sculptor bought time to think on the problem of reinforcing the tablets while he carved the entire shape.

The sculptor traces out each layer of Styrofoam and cuts it out on the band saw. He assembles the entire structure by gluing each layer with a spray adhesive, Neo-bond. Once the structure is secure, he rough carves the prop, establishing major lines and planes and getting each piece to flow into the next. The sculptors use a variety of cutting tools, including jigsaws, kitchen knives, hot knives, serrated and straight blades, and even a circular metal curry comb usually used for grooming horses. After the rough carving, the sculptor works on refining the details with smaller blades. Once he completes the carving, the sculptor uses a variety of sandpapers and files to smooth the entire surface of the prop to prepare it for paper-mâché.

Paper-mâché is the art of using glue and paper to create a hard, smooth outer covering, and the tradition dates back to Ancient Egypt. The prop shop cooks a flour and water mixture for the glue and uses large rolls of brown craft paper, a method both economical and plentiful. The glue girl boils water and adds it to the flour mixture, cooking it until it has the consistency of cream. She tears the paper into manageable strips and always removes the hard edges of the roll; the edges blend into each other much better if they are feathered by hand tearing – no scissors. She paints the glue mixture onto both sides of the paper with a chip brush, forcing the glue into the paper. Then she tears the paper by hand into smaller pieces and lays it on the foam prop. As the props have a lot of detail and curved lines, she shreds the paper into very small pieces in order to not interrupt the line of the foam and accommodate the curves. The glue girl covers every piece of the foam with paper ensuring a smooth finish with no bubbles or gaps. The paper-mâché process often takes several days, depending on the size and intricacy of the prop.

Figure 10: Horse after paper-mâché

After the paper-mâché is dry, someone basecoats the prop with white paint and delivers it to the paint area. Kern employs three full-time painters, and a handful of part-time and weekend painters. Of the three full-time painters, one exclusively paints all words on props and signage, one focuses on painterly techniques, and the master painter is proficient in all areas. The painter uses the art director's full-color rendering and matches the original drawing. Once the piece is painted, it is taken across the river to the old warehouse and coated with a sprayed sealant to protect the prop from mold and water damage.

Figure 11: Horse after paint

Another division in the prop shop, the flower area, employs two full-time employees who fashion the flowers for each float year-round. Different flower shapes cover the sides of each float. The flower guy traces out the large petal shapes onto white poster board, tape together several sheets of the board, and cut out the petals with the band

saw. Next, he position two petals together with 18 gage wires running through the petals in a cross shape and glues the two petals together with spray adhesive. The wire allows the petal to hold the desired three-dimensional shape and to connect the petals to one another. The individual petals are painted on both sides. Then the flower boys bag up the flattened completed flowers until the float is ready for assembly.

The Kern Studios owns two warehouses on both sides of the Mississippi: the prop shop on the New Orleans side and the older unit on the Westbank. Both warehouses are full of old props: heads, full figures, torsos, and objects such as a hot-air balloon, tank, and trees. I found it incredible that there is no comprehensive list of existing props; the prop shop manager keeps the inventory in his head. Kern Studios also owns Mardi Gras dens all over the city where they store unused floats. The prop shop warehouse generally holds over twenty floats full-time including several of the signature floats like the Smokey Mary and the Bacchagator. The tour groups see the finished project year-round. The shop brings in every float for a parade when it is time to assemble the parade. While the shop will work on props for different parades like Bacchus or Endymion at the same time, they only assemble one parade at a time.

I observed this process in action for a parade in New Orleans in September 2010 celebrating the Saints' 2010 Super Bowl victory and marking the beginning of the 2011 football season. The parade was different from Mardi Gras parades in that it did feature advertisements and business signage on the floats, something outlawed during Mardi Gras through tradition and local law. The Super Bowl parade consisted of ten floats, including the aforementioned Smokey Mary, some refurbished props such as the soccer player who was turned into a football player, and several brand new props, such as a giant Snickers bar. I worked at Kern two days before the parade rolled; the sponsoring organization came by at the end of that day for a final inspection of the entire parade.

Figure 12: Soccer/Football Player

The transportation workers used the small tractors to line up all of the floats in the middle of the warehouse. I swept, cleaned, and stocked the inside of each float with two fire extinguishers. Every rider wears a harness that clips to the float to protect the riders from falling off during the ride. I checked the number and condition of each harness. All of the prop shop workers surrounded the floats, attaching extra signage, hanging flags, and perfecting the details. A worker even marked over the screw heads to blend them into the paint. The Super Bowl parade was televised, and the Studio took extra care on the televised side.

On my last day interning with Blaine Kern Studios, the prop shop manager directed me to work with the sculptor, Alex, who was repairing and modifying a foam boat. Alex instructed me to remove and replace the broken side of the boat, to add a wooden tip to the mast, and to add a rock face to the front of the boat so that it looked like it had crashed into a rock pile. Then he told me that I had to have it finished by the end of the day. He went to work building a mast for the boat. I took a new piece of foam and traced the outline of the existing edge on the broken side. Then I cut out the

Figure 13: Mast Detail

ship shape with a jigsaw. I sprayed a layer of expanding foam on both sides and quickly drove 6" nails into both pieces of foam. The expanding foam pushed the pieces apart, but by driving the nails in at an angle, I pinched it in place. Then I went to work on the wooden piece so that the foam could dry during lunch. Last year, Alex screwed the Spanish wood to the boat's frame on edge-to-edge, but the wooden tip split when removed. I added two supporting pieces on the sides to sandwich the wooden piece inside the boat frame. I cut away a niche in the existing foam and then screwed in the wood pieces to hold it all in place. I reattached the foam tip covering the seam with more expanding foam and left it to dry.

After lunch, I carved the boat side and top with a currycomb. I prefer carving with a rasp or cob than the hot knife; the lines are more organic, and I find it an easier way to control the depth of my scraping. As long as I kept circulating around the piece instead of staying in the same place, then I could keep the area uniform. After I shaped the boat with the rasp, I sanded the area smooth for paper-mâché with 40-grit and 80-grit sandpaper. I used scrap pieces of foam to make the rocks and attached them with expanding foam. I was able to get all of the pieces attached and rough carved the rock shapes. At the end of the day, Alex was very pleased with the result – and I was happy, too.

I learned a great deal from the different sculptors, glue girls, and painters I assisted. The magnitude of Blaine Kern Studios is overwhelming – the warehouses are huge, the props are huge, the floats are huge, and the amount of tourists that stand around and take pictures of you all day long was astounding. However, the care with which each employee took every project impressed me the most. The workers are creating art: beautiful, imaginative, and detailed artwork in a large scale, intended to tell a story and entertain that will impress and amaze the audience come Fat Tuesday.

Figure 14: Ship side after carving

Chapter 5: Putting the Lessons to Practical Use

After learning on the twin tracks of research and apprenticeship, I wanted to build my own float. I contacted the founder of the Box of Wine parade, Ann Marie Coviello, and spoke to her about marching with her parade. She created the Box of Wine parade in 1992 to honor the Bacchus parade and as a gift to those waiting to secure the prime throw-catching spots along St. Charles Avenue. After a run-in with the New Orleans Police Department in 2000, the Box of Wine is one of the few legal small walking parades that applies for a parade permit and has police escorts. The parade is always free and open to anyone that wants to participate. Coviello requested that I not profit monetarily from the event and that Box of Wine would get top billing in any publicity. I profit from the float by receiving a Masters degree, and I understood that I would get no financial assistance from the LSU Theatre department. I attended a fundraiser for the Box of Wine parade and donated money to help cover the parade costs: namely, the parading permit, custom throws, and boxes of wine. I spoke with Coviello a handful of times. We discussed setting the floats in place at the start, the 1.7-mile parade route along St. Charles, the end point, and removing the float.

In deciding the subject matter of my own float, I looked to past and present mythology, images I collected for inspiration, and personally meaningful stories. I contemplated making a train of a rubber duck family in the style of *Make Way for Ducklings* by Robert McCloskey. I would use children's wagons as the base for each duck but ultimately discarded the idea as too simplistic – mostly, I wanted to dress as the Morton Salt Girl in a rain jacket and boots, an incredibly practical Mardi Gras costume.

I also considered building the River Styx, the place where man discards his hopes, dreams, fears, and regrets as he travels to the land of the dead. I would have to release my bathtub, my books, and my family. I informally polled several people and received similar answers: musical instruments, photos, childhood toys, money, degrees, tools, technology, and guilty pleasures. I imagined a float with a fabric river, a half-sunk paddleboat reminiscent of the shipwrecked boats left inland after Hurricane Katrina, and covered in the trash and debris of life. I decided against the River Styx because it needed a strong structure to support the weight of a 500-pound paddleboat and would be too heavy to pull by hand. The Box of Wine parade does not allow any motorized trailers.

Looking for more inspiration, I turned to my bookshelves and found my copy of *The Wizard of Oz* by L. Frank Baum. My love affair with theatre began in 1989 when I played a munchkin chef at an outdoor Greek amphitheater at Jasmine Hill Gardens in Wetumpka, Alabama. It was the rainiest June on record that year, and I alternately froze in the rain or sweated in the heat; we munchkins spent our offstage time corralled on the porch underneath the stage, and water fell on our heads even if it was not currently raining. My mom and I went to a workshop to make my fake mustache and goatee, and I constructed my first costume prop for a play. I only used the hairpiece once; I screamed so loudly when the crew removed it that I scared the director. The experience was typical, awful, amateur, summer-stock-with-children, and I fell in love with theatre's backstage camaraderie and never left. Over the years, I collected Oz memorabilia, read many of Baum's other Oz stories, and watched the film versions, including the classic 1939 version, the terrifying *Return to Oz*, *Wicked*, and the miniseries *Tin Man*. I can sing all the songs, although I have never watched the original film tuned to Pink Floyd's *Dark Side of the Moon*.

I have always wanted to make a tableau from the poppy field. Dorothy and the Lion are asleep, the Tin Man and Scarecrow call for help, and the Emerald City glitters in the distance, but the characters are lost in a sea of red. They have exited the dangerous dark of the woods into the open sky and can see their final destination. The sweet seductive smell of the poppies lures the breathing creatures to a deadly sleep. In the movie, the Lion and Dorothy fall asleep together and

are saved when the Good Witch Glinda sends a snowstorm. In the Baum book, Dorothy falls asleep and the Tin Man carries her out of the field. The Lion attempts to run out of the poppies as fast as possible, but he falls asleep just inside the edge of the field. The Rat King and several hundred of his friends manage to tow the Lion out of the field as he wakes up. I chose to stage the moment when all four characters are together, the moment when the problem overpowers the solution, the moment right before action is taken.

I drew a rough sketch of the layout of the float. I outlined each element: the poppies, the Emerald City, Tin Man, Lion, Scarecrow, and Dorothy. I chose to use recycled and found materials as much as possible to save on cost and to respect the handcrafted quality of the Box of Wine parade. I wanted to use a different set of materials and techniques for each item to better display the variety of skills I learned in the Props program. I chose metal for the Tin Man, foam and needlework for the Lion, fabric and lumber for Scarecrow, foam and fabric for Dorothy, and paper-mâché for the poppies and Emerald City. I devised a rough list of steps for each element and a timeline. I began building the float in late November for the parade March 6th.

I intended to borrow a trailer for the base of the float. Eventually, the idea fell through and I borrowed a 4'8' platform. I elevated and raked it and mounted it on casters. The total structure weighed approximately 250-lbs and it fit inside a 14' truck. I used the truck as a mobile storage unit, to transport the float safely from Baton Rouge to New Orleans and to protect it while in the city. I legally parked the float at the parade start point the night before the event, and I was able to lift the float in and out of the truck with one other person. Having a platform instead of a trailer simplified the transportation problems.

Poppies

Poppies cover the entire base of the float, creating a sea of red. I chose phone book pages to make the petals because they keep getting delivered to my house but I use Google. I started by drawing a lopsided heart template out of cardstock and then traced the template onto the yellow pages. I could fit six petals onto a page. I would then cut out the petals with scissors. In twenty minutes, I could complete six pages, giving me thirty-six cutouts, or eighteen petals (since each petal consists of two cutouts), or six flowers (three petals to one flower). A local special effect company allowed me to use a pneumatic press from the 1940s, originally used to cut shoe leather. They use it to cut paper and fabric reinforcements for their silicone masks, and they had a three-leaf clover die. I could fit six of the dies onto one page. After adjusting the pressure in the pneumatic press, I was able to cut through the entire phone book in twenty minutes, saving me a lot of time. By overlapping two eye cutouts, I approximated the shape of a poppy petal.

Figure 15: Poppy steps

I rubber-cemented a piece of 22 gauge wire into the center of the petals. The wire allows the petal to bend and hold its shape. I staggered

the three-leaf clovers to give the petal more surface area. I painted both sides of the petals with paper mâché to create stiffness.

The most difficult part of this process was spatial; I needed drying racks so air could circulate around the petals and they would dry flat but not glue to the drying surface. I developed a method using two shopping carts laid on their sides, the bottom of three crates, and a fan. I circulated among the petals, flipping them every five minutes and moving them from one rack to another according to its dryness level.

I painted both sides of the petals with a watered down red, orange, or pink poster paint to create variety and depth of color. I sponged a bit of black paint onto one side to recreate the central stamens of poppies. To assemble the flowers, I took three petals and twisted the center of a gold pipe cleaner around the base of the petals to link them together. I then arranged each petal in an s-shape with the black paint facing inwards and bent the gold pipe cleaner so it stuck out the center of the flower at an angle. I tied the flowers to hardware cloth with the extra inches of petal wire. I added bits of greenery from the fake flower bin to break up the red; the individual flowers "popped" against the complimentary green. I purchased a few pinwheel flowers and painted them red with black and gold dots in the center. I threaded them through the hardware cloth at the front edge of the float. They spun beautifully as we rolled down St. Charles.

Figure 16: Poppy detail

Figure 17: Pinwheel Poppy

Emerald City

I saw the Emerald City as a glittery silhouette to punctuate the end of the float: cylinders of varying heights with different tops. I collected empty cardboard tubes – fabric rolls, paper towels, wrapping paper, and mailing tubes. I bought deeply discounted Christmas ornaments from Goodwill and Hobby Lobby in January, including small, medium, and large balls and different pointy tops. I cut the large tubes to different heights and hot-glued an ornament on top. I then paper-mâchéd forty tubes. I papered three coats on each ornament to protect the easily broken glass or ceramics. The paper towel and wrapping paper cardboard is thin, so I papered two coats on them to increase strength; I papered one coat on the heavy tubes to give them the same outer texture as the others.

Figure 18: Cardboard tubes with ornaments

I then mounted the tubes onto a 4' board. I shot five brads into the bottom of each tube, using the angle to pinch the tube in place. I secured the seam with a thick layer of hot-glue. The brads shot through the thinner tubes but the glue provided a thicker surface to penetrate. In hindsight, it would have been easier to paint and glitter the tubes and then mount them to the board, as I found it difficult to maneuver the board while glittering them.

I painted the City with a mixture of leftover lime and grass green paint. I then laid the structure on its side in my driveway and started to apply glitter, a very messy process from which my driveway will not recover. I mixed three parts emerald glitter with two parts lime glitter and one part silver glitter for depth of color. I tried several different glue mixtures using up my personal glue stock, usually thinned with a little water to improve viscosity. The wood glue dried a yellow color, the spray Elmer's glue did not hold, but the white glue spread cleanly and dried clear. I painted two coats of glue and glitter, laying each side flat and then standing it upright so the glitter would stick. I persuaded someone to hold the structure upright so that I could glue the sides of each tube. The Emerald City shed glitter when I looked at it, so I painted a thick coat of clear satin glaze and applied a final coat of glitter while it was wet. The glaze hardened the surface

Figure 19: Emerald City after paper-mâché

Figure 20: Installed Emerald City

and the Emerald City no longer sheds.

I counteracted the platform's rake with a small shim that ran the length of the board and screwed it in place. I bought scrap pieces of fake landscape grass for model trains and stapled pieces of it extending from the Emerald City toward the poppies. The grass softened the edge of the board and hid the seam. I painted a thin yellow line meandering from the center of the city to a foam cutout of the Yellow Brick Road. By wrapping the painted line back and forth on the grass and gradually increasing its thickness, I created distance from the characters and the city by forcing perspective. I carved the Yellow Brick Road out of thin blue foam in the empty space between the Lion's head and the Emerald City. I drew a template on craft paper and traced it out on the foam. I cut it out with a hot knife and then used it to carve the lines of the bricks. I painted a wet coat of black paint on the lines and wiped off the excess with a paper towel, leaving paint inside the lines. I scumbled yellow and gold paint over the bricks, sponging a wet blend of the two colors. Once the paint was dry, I screwed the Road in place.

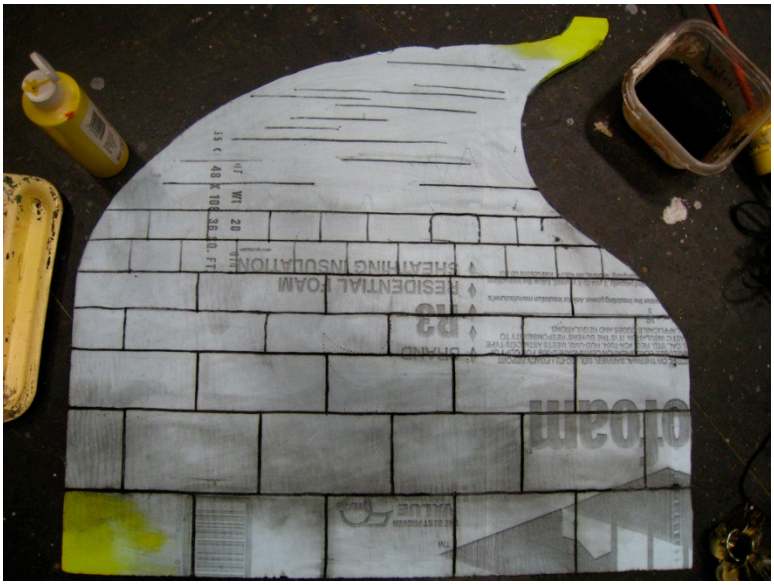

Figure 21: Yellow Brick Road

Tin Man

I gathered empty tin cans from Thanksgiving and Christmas celebrations and a massive batch of chili. I saved all of the lids as well. I needed large cans for the torso, and I asked a local Italian restaurant to donate six large empty cans from red peppers. I removed all of the labels and washed the cans thoroughly.

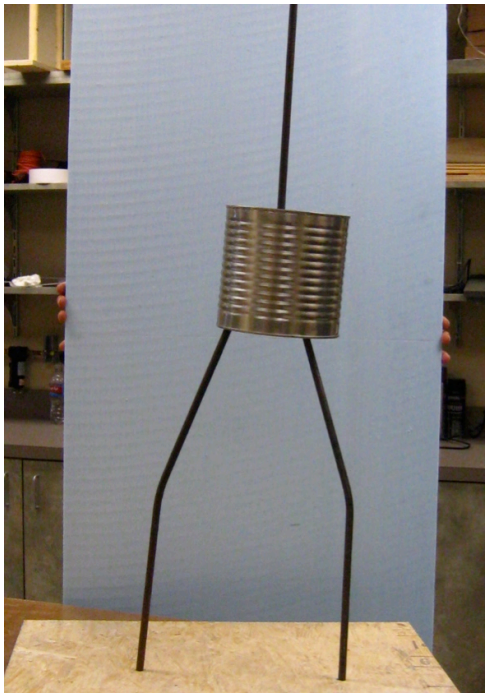

Figure 22: Tin Man frame

I tacked together the cans with masking tape to build the rough shape of the Tin Man. I used half a can for the shoes, two for each shin, two for each thigh, two for each bicep, two for each forearm, three large cans for the torso, one small can for the neck, and one large can for the head. I extended each body part by epoxying the cans together with the bottoms at either end. However, the Tin Man needed to travel and epoxy alone did not hold the cans in the shape I wanted. He needed a skeleton. I cut a 3/8" metal rod at 2' intervals, one for each leg and each arm, and one for the torso and head.

I made several paper templates by tracing the bottom of the cans, folding them to find the center, and cutting a small hole. I used the templates to mark the center of each can pair bottom quickly. I marked the center with a scribe and drilled a 3/8" hole through the top and bottom of each piece. I bent the metal rod at its center to make the correct angle for the legs and then slid on the cans for the shins and thighs. I drilled two holes into the side of the bottom of the torso where the thigh met the torso and inserted the rods through the holes. I welded the rods together with a small piece of scrap steel to bridge the gap and make a flat surface for the torso rod. I then welded the torso rod on top of the steel scrap. I built the arms in the same manner as the legs and welded them together inside the topmost torso can, making sure they did not meet in the exact center and interfere with the torso rod. I slid the central torso piece onto the body and used epoxy to hold the cans in line. I topped the rod coming from the torso with the small neck can and the large head can.

Figure 23: Installed Tin Man

Once I finished the armature and the body, I cut one can in half for his shoes and welded them in place. I added the extra can lids to all of his joints; they add more texture and depth and help hold him in place. I cut a large head can in the shape of his jaw and attached it with metal screws. I also screwed in a pull-top from a metal can for his nose, three different sized washers for his eyes, two washers for each button on his torso, and a piece of broken hardware for his ears. I stuffed two kitchen gloves with batting and glued them to the cans to make his hands. I hot glued a large

funnel to the top of his head. I spray painted the entire structure with two coats of silver. I outlined the edge of the washers on his eyes and buttons with a black sharpie to add contrast and definition. I bought a red sequin bowtie, a yellow funnel for the glass he is raising to the Box of Wine, and a small ax for his lower hand. The red bowtie really pops and ties him thematically with the poppies.

Figure 24: Tin Man face

Lion

I built the Lion out of foam and yarn. I crocheted his mane onto athletic mesh, and I carved his body out of scrap styrofoam. At first, I wanted to use a yoga ball for the head, but I quickly discovered that it was too large and used a 12" beach ball instead. I made a template for the fabric from brown craft paper. I draped the mesh over the ball, gathering darts to make the correct shape. I measured the centerline from the top of the ball's forehead to the back off his nape. I cut out the mesh and serged the two halves together and then serged the darts. I sewed bias tape around all of the edges to strengthen the mesh and prevent unraveling. After I crocheted the bottom two inches of the garment, I realized that the athletic mesh garment was four inches too long, so I serged a swath out of the middle of the garment.

Figure 25: Lion mane athletic mesh

Yarn can be expensive, and I needed a lot of yarn to create the lion's mane. I like to knit blankets and used all of my personal yarn stock that fell into the red, yellow, brown, white, or black color palettes from several partly used balls. Mid-grade yarn made of cotton or a polycrlyic blend begins at $2 for 100 grams for a ball. I purchased several sweaters from Goodwill for $3 a piece. Each sweater contains four to six balls of yarn. I cut out the seams with scissors, separating the arms from the torso and the neck. I separated the individual strands of yarn using a crochet hook. Recycled sweater yarn is crinkly when it is pulled out which added more three-dimensionality and texture to the mane. After using the arm pieces, I cut squares out of the torso.

To cut the yarn balls to length, I set an upside-down stool on top of a swivel chair and tied one end of the yarn around the base of the stool. I turned the swivel chair to wrap the yarn around the bottom of the stool; one rotation equaled 33". I then cut the circle of yarn at the start point and then again at the halfway mark.

I cut approximately forty pieces of each color of yarn at a time. I looped several different colors around my left index finger at their mid points and then used the crochet hook to pull one loop around one strand of the mesh. I pulled the end through and knotted a strand to each side of the mesh. In the 2" around the edge of the garment, I knotted a loop on each of the four sides of the mesh squares. I tied half as many loops in the center of the garment.

I am an experienced knitter in large-scale projects, and I knew that this section of the project would be time-intensive. I carried all of the yarn with me and worked on it throughout the day, in restaurants, at home watching television, etc. The completed mane weighs about ten pounds and is thick with a variety of colors and textures. It is my favorite piece on the float.

Figure 26: Lion mane while crocheting

I approximated the overall size of the lion's body. I fit together several scrap pieces of styrofoam to cover the whole area. I sprayed a layer of Great Stuff across a connecting plane. Great Stuff is expanding foam commonly used for insulation. I pinched together the foam chunks with dowels to hold them in place for a tight connection. The entire structure cured overnight. I used a handsaw to cut out the basic shape of the lion's shoulders, front legs, haunches, and back legs. I used the rasp to smooth out the planes and add more curves into the shape. I referenced pictures and diagrams of lion anatomy to follow the shape of a lion lying on its side.

I covered the body with a thick stippled liquid foam coating. It dries hard and prevents the foam from chipping. I used it instead of paper-mâché because it was in stock, much faster than paper-mâché, and the finished product's texture is more like fur than the smooth paper. I sponge painted the sculpture with several coats of glaze. Glaze, unlike paint, is transparent, and I built up layers of browns, reds, and yellows to build depth and contrast.

The Lion still needed a nosepiece peeking out from the mane. I borrowed a lion mask from the LSU Costume shop to use as a three-dimensional model for the nose and carved it out of foam. I painted the nose and inserted gold pipe cleaners for the whiskers.

I cut a 3/8" wood dowel at 2' for the tail. I cut a strip of muslin at 3" wide and 3'6" long and sewed the sides together to form a tube. I gathered the fabric around the dowel and painted it brown. I took some of the leftover yarn scraps and wrapped them together to form a pom-pom, which I tied to the end of the dowel. I secured the dowel in the hardware cloth on the float so that his tail could wave in the wind.

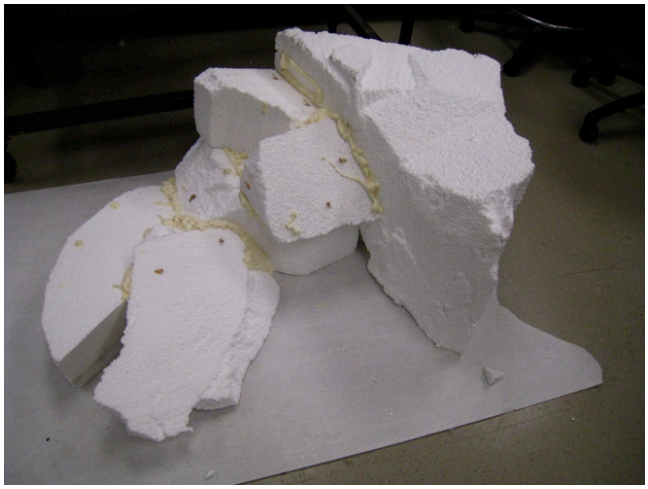

Figure 27: Lion body before carving

Figure 28: Lion body after carving

Figure 29: Lion nose detail and research

Dorothy

The most iconic part of Dorothy's image is her blue and white checked dress. I found the perfect child's dress at Goodwill that provided the start point. The special effects company CFX donated one of their foam heads. They ship a foam head with each silicone mask; the back of a woman's head was damaged with a small dent and they could not use it. Since Dorothy was lying down and I was going to cover the back of her head with hair, the head worked perfectly. I did not have to carve a face from foam, and it saved me a great deal of time. I laid out the head and the dress.

Figure 30: Dorothy head and arms

I took two pieces of scrap styrofoam and drew a left and right arm. I cut them out with a handsaw and used a rasp to shape the shoulder, elbow, arm, and hands. I drew indentions between her fingers with a hot-knife. I sanded her arms smooth with 100grit and 150-grit sandpaper. I covered her arms with a watered-down foam coat. Watering down the foam coat smooths its texture. In the end, her arms are quite husky. Dorothy is supposed to be a butterball ten-year-old Midwestern farm girl, but the line of her shoulders makes her resemble a linebacker. I found it difficult to match the line of her arms with the line of her head, and I could have taken more time to correct the problem.

I painted her arms and face with a pink basecoat. I added layers of tan, white, and yellow to make her skin more realistic. I painted her lips, eyes, cheeks, and eyebrows. I glued on a pair of fake eyelashes. I used a brown yarn for her hair to thematically tie her to the texture of the Lion. I measured the head from the back of the nape to the top of her forehead and cut a 2" piece of black elastic to length. I then calculated the length of her hair from side-to-side and cut the yarn at 32". I hot-glued the center of each piece of yarn onto the center of the black elastic. I attached two full layers to the elastic and pinned it into the foam head. I French-braided her hair into two pigtails. I had to braid her hair twice; the first time, the


Figure 31: Dorothy hair

edge of her hair pulled back too far over her ears. I tied white ribbon bows on her braids to add another layer of color and texture.

I bought a pair of girl's white patent Mary Jane style shoes. I painted a thick layer of glue on the shoes and sprinkled them with silver glitter. I applied two layers of the glue and glitter and then covered them with a coat of clear glaze. In Baum's story Dorothy wears silver slippers; the 1939 film version chose to change them to ruby red to make the most of the new Technicolor process. I dyed a pair of knee-high socks blue. I stuffed the socks with batting and sewed a gather stitch to form the bend of her knees.

When it came time to assemble Dorothy's body, I had a head with half a torso, two arms, two stuffed socks, and two shoes. I took a pair of women's control-top pantyhose and stretched the hose over the torso part of the head. I filled the hose with batting and egg-crate foam to complete her torso. I tied off the hose legs after 9" and sewed the socks onto the hose. I bent her legs into place and put the socks inside her shoes. I had a very difficult time attaching her arms to her head, as the two foams were of a different density. In the end, I ran 6" screws through the shoulders and into the head. I elevated Dorothy's head on the platform with two ferns underneath it so that the audience could see her face.

Figure 32: Dorothy body while stuffing

Figure 33: Dorothy installed

Scarecrow

Farmers make a decoy human figure by stuffing clothes and attaching them to a pole to scare away birds from recently planted crops. I bought a child's pair of brown corduroy pants, a blue flannel shirt, a man's straw hat, and a pair of child's brown leather boots. I stuffed the clothes with batting and pinned then together in the shape I wanted. I made the scarecrow a short fat man to contrast with the other standing character, the skinny bright Tin Man. I built a frame from scrap 2x2 lumber with two supports for the legs and one central support for the torso and head. I predrilled the lumber so it would not split, and glued the joins for extra strength and stability. I attached the shoes to the frame by running screws up through the bottom of the shoes and into the frame. The armature leaned forward when I stood it up because of the springy sole of the shoes, so I screwed an L bracket into the bottom of each leg piece. I then screwed the bottom side of the bracket directly into the base of the platform.

Figure 34: Scarecrow clothes and frame

To make the Scarecrow's face and head, I measured the inside circumference of the straw hat. I cut out a circle of muslin that was ½" smaller. I then cut a 12" wide piece of muslin as long as the

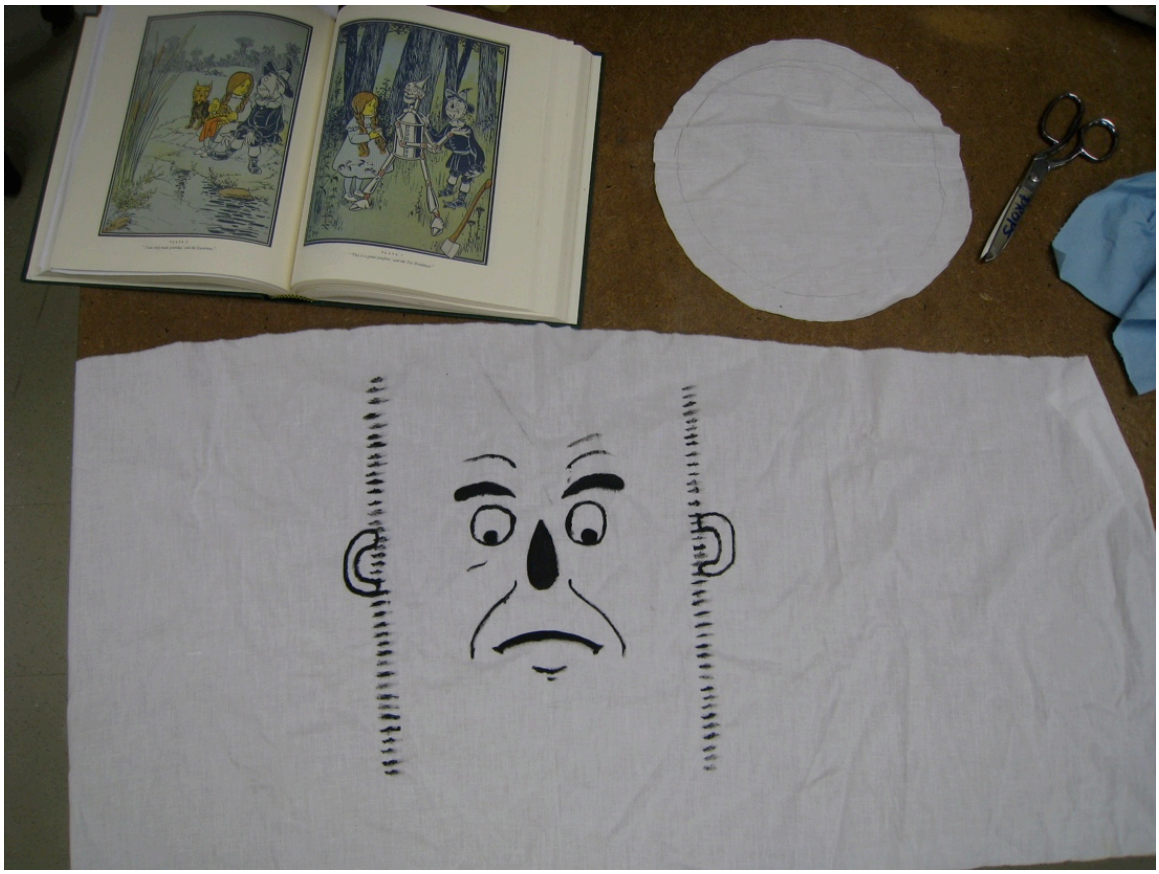

Figure 35: Scarecrow face

circumference of the circle. I drew his face using the Baum drawings as a guide. I painted the features and stitch marks running along the sides of his face with black paint, and then I painted all of the fabric with a dirty brown wash to make him look stained and dirty. I sewed the face rectangle to the circle with a ½" seam, and then serged the back seam of his face together.

I stuffed the face with batting and sewed the hat onto the top of his head. I dressed the frame with the corduroy pants and screwed in the shoes. Then I stuffed his legs with batting and egg-crate foam, running gathering stitches at his knees to form an angle. I sewed the shirt onto his pants and stuffed the shirt around the frame. I tied a piece of twine around his waist to hold in his gut. I sewed a pair of my gloves onto the ends of his sleeves and sewed his head to his shirt. I ran several stitches from his gloves to his face, so that his body language read "Oh no!" I cut the edge of the brim off the straw hat and threaded the scrap straw into his shirtfront and gloves. I attached the Scarecrow to the platform on a small shim to accommodate the rake and ran several screws through his shoes and L brackets into the base of the platform.

Figure 35: Scarecrow face

Assembly

I built each element of the float individually. A week before the parade, I began assembling the entire float. I need a lot of floor space and access to power and tools, so I put it together in the LSU Scene shop. I had to work around the shop's schedule and needs for the space. I gathered my "krewe" of five helpers on Saturday to help me put the pieces in place. Not wanting to waste the time of my volunteers, I prepared for their help by making a master list of every finishing step for each element. I looked at the strengths and skills of each volunteer and assigned tasks accordingly – my very favorite part of the process – working with people and putting together the jigsaw puzzle of people and jobs. Anthony likes to build and does not like working with small, craft-oriented projects, so he cut and attached the legs to the platform using my drafting as a reference. He cut plates for the bottom of each leg for the caster mount and screwed and glued them in place. He also cut and attached the shims for the Emerald City, Tin Man, and Scarecrow. He painted the platform green. Cammie is proficient with hand sewing, and she needed to be able to sit comfortably while working, so I gave her the Scarecrow. She sewed the clothing together around the frame. Emilie and Katie are excellent painters, and they put the final touches of color on Dorothy's face and arms and finished painting the pinwheel poppies according to the example I made. Amanda's crafty skills are versatile, and I asked her to construct the Lion's tail and pom-pom. I had a moment of panic at one point in the day; I had worked on every element by myself for so long that it was hard to let go and accept their help. I reminded myself that I trusted them to follow the instructions I gave them. Actually completing the project was more important than my attending to every tiny detail.

My fiancé came in the following day and worked with me for three days to finish the float. He is a skilled builder, and we work well together. I tell him my idea and how I plan to build it, and he asks questions that force me to think of unforeseen problems and solutions. After we discuss the overall plan and how to break it down, I can assign him tasks. Even though he may not build something using the same methods I would use, I do not have to oversee his every step like my assembly krewe. I can trust that his work will hold since we have discussed the desired finished product. He attached the casters to the platform frame. I chose 10" pneumatic casters with a large tread. The pneumatic wheels ran smoothly on the street surface and absorbed the bumps in the road. He attached additional bracing to the legs of the platform for stability. We fastened each element into place and stapled hardware cloth in the blank spots. I bent the cloth to provide more depth and dimension. We wired the poppies and greenery into place on the cloth. We stapled red mylar fringe around the bottom of the platform to fill in the space between the base of the platform and the street. He fastened handles at 2' intervals on the sides of the platform for pulling and tied in a short length of rope onto the lower handles so that the puller would not have to bend down. He also tied in a longer piece of rope to the front edge of the platform for someone to steer it. He built a shelf underneath the float that we used during the parade to hold coats, coolers, throws, and an emergency tool kit. I added wire butterflies in the poppy field as a final touch.

I had to transport the float from Baton Rouge to New Orleans for the Box of Wine parade. I rented a 14' enclosed truck, and we drove it to New Orleans. As I mentioned earlier, parking there during the parade season is difficult, at best. I moved the truck to the start point for the parade the night before and left it there. I invited my friends and family to walk with me in the Box of Wine parade and instructed them to come in a *Wizard of Oz* costume. The Wicked Witch of the West, a few munchkins, two flying monkeys, and several citizens of the Emerald City walked with me (I dressed as Glinda the Good Witch). We met the Box of Wine krewe at the start point and waited for several hours before we finally started to roll. I love that parade; the entire operation is barely-functioning chaos and slightly controlled anarchy, but the entire experience was wonderful. I built the different elements of the float alone, then brought in a small, trusted group to help me install the

elements, added a larger circle of loved ones to help me pull it, and shared my gift with all of the strangers standing along St. Charles. We pulled the float 1.7 miles along the St. Charles parade route; we passed out beads and boxes of wine. Unfortunately, the final experience of pulling the float is a blur for me – I was so focused on making sure that the float and my people were okay that I forgot to look around at the audience. We ended the parade and put it back in the truck for the return to Baton Rouge.

Figure 37: Completed float

Conclusion

The best theatrical design teacher I ever had distilled his craft to two simple questions – what do you see, and how does it make you feel? External stimulus interacts with the internal mind and creates emotion, the basis of human experience. As an artist, I cannot control the audience's mind, but I can control the visual environment they see, ultimately influencing their reaction. From its origins, theatre attempts to tell a story that will bring an emotional response – catharsis. As a designer, I force my eyes to inform my heart; I can use my mind to analyze my reaction, but the focus must be on the feeling. While theatrical methods and styles have evolved over the years, the elements of storytelling remain the same.

Louisiana has a rich cultural history of creating public art in the form of parades – financed by the upper class, built by the artistic professional class, and enjoyed by all. Each float tells a story, but its overall value contains more than the sum of each float and parade. Mardi Gras provides an opportunity for the community to join together across economic, racial, and social lines. While the pagan origins of the celebrations evaporated from the public consciousness, the trappings of masks and costume remained. Throughout the various incantations of the springtime rituals of rebirth, the magic of metamorphosis remains the same. Costume and masks are the great equalizers of the celebration – all participants can transform themselves into anything or anyone else. Costume also blurs the distinction between performer (those on the float) and audience (those watching the parade).

My apprenticeship with Blaine Kern's Mardi Gras World brought these traditions to life in a grand scale. The impressive scope of their work speaks to a reverence of historical custom peculiar to the South. While outsiders see us as a slow-moving, slow-speaking, and backward people, they are missing the deeper meaning behind continuing to do things the way they have always been done. By holding on to that historical tradition, we bridge our present with the past and bring in a new meaning for the future. Kern Studios upholds its own artistic traditions by preserving the past and reusing it for the present, evidenced by the props' reusability. By learning from the masters at Kern, I was able to add their experience with my own working in the LSU Prop Shop. I combined these different skills and techniques to form my own float, a hybrid of the traditional float-making and theatrical design process. When I first developed the idea to build my own float in honor of the Box of Wine parade, I wanted a showcase for my skills with a variety of materials and methods. I carved foam, built a wood armature, welded metal, sewed fabric, crocheted yarn, painted, and paper-mâchéd. The end result, my Poppy Field from *The Wizard of Oz*, exhibits a variety of textures and colors, and I believe that it successfully illustrates my original goals of learning through immersion and a showcase for the skills I have learned at Louisiana State University.

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Appendix A: Poppies Time/Cost

Designer: Whitney Whetstone	**"The Poppy Field"**	
Production Element: Poppies		
Construction Procedure	**Estimate**	**Actual Hrs.**
Shopping	0	2
Cut out petals	10	0.5
Cut wire to length	0	2
Rubber cement wire inside two petals	4	4
Paint red and black	14	4
Paint with glue mixture	8	24
Cut pipe cleaners	0	1
Assemble 3 petals with pipe cleaner	4	9
Tie to hardware cloth	6	4
Paint large poppies	0	3
Totals	46	53.5
Materials	**Quantity**	**Cost**
Phone book pages	1 book	Stock
16 and 24 gauge wire	250 ft.	$11.86
Rubber cement	1 jar	Stock
Glue Mixture	1 gallon	Stock
Gold pipe cleaners	1 pkg.	$5.44
Red and black paint	6 oz.	Stock
Large pinwheel poppies	4	$4.32
Total		$21.62

Appendix B: Emerald City Time/Cost

Designer: Whitney Whetstone	**"The Poppy Field"**	
Production Element: Emerald City		
Construction Procedure	**Estimate**	**Actual Hrs.**
Shopping	0	6
Cut large tubes to size	1	1
Hot glue ornaments to top	0	5
Cover with paper-mâché	20	27
Mount tubes to board	0	2
Paint green	8	1
Glitter tubes	8	10
Mount to platform	6	1
Totals	43	53
Materials	**Quantity**	**Cost**
Cardboard tubes	40	Donation
Christmas Ornaments	49	$8.66
Hot glue	1 pkg	Stock
Glue Mixture	6 batches	Stock
Phone book pages	1 book	Stock
Glitter: 4 parts emerald green, 1 part lime green, 1 part silver	48 oz.	$25.02
Clear coat glaze	1 quart	Stock
Elmer's spray adhesive	1 bottle	$7.62
Wood glue	½ bottle	Stock
White glue	1 bottle	Stock
Emerald green paint	1 quart	Stock
1x6 board	4'	$4.35
Total		$45.65

Appendix C: Tin Man Time/Cost

Designer: Whitney Whetstone	**"The Poppy Field"**	
Production Element: Tin Man		
Construction Procedure	**Estimate**	**Actual Hrs.**
Shopping	0	4
Epoxy cans to extend pieces	2	2
Drill holes for frame	0	2
Weld frame	6	8
Weld cans and lids at joints	6	4
Attach hat	1	1
Cut hardware for face and attach	4	2
Cut shoes and attach	2	1
Stuff and attach hands	3	1
Attach washer detail to torso	2	1
Spray silver	2	1
Dress with glass, bowtie, and ax handle	0	1
Totals	28	28
Materials	**Quantity**	**Cost**
Tin cans	10	Donation
Various lids	9	Donation
Epoxy	1 bottle	$5.42
3/8" metal rod	10 feet	Stock
Small funnel	1	$0.97
Medium funnel	1	$1.62
3/8" washers	15	$1.71
3/16" washers	15	$1.06
Kitchen gloves	1 pair	$1.62
Red Bowtie	1 pair	$6.49
Silver spray paint	1 can	$3.53
Batting	¼ bag	Stock
Metal screws	12	Stock
Sharpie	1	Stock
Total		$22.42

Appendix D: Lion Time/Cost

Designer: Whitney Whetstone	**"The Poppy Field"**	
Production Element: Lion		
Construction Procedure	**Estimate**	**Actual Hrs.**
Shopping	0	4
Cut template for mane	0	2
Sew mane garment	0	5
Cut yarn to length	0	21
Crochet yarn onto mesh	26	63
Glue foam pieces together	0	2
Sculpt lion body	6	8
Sculpt face	0	1
Sand foam	0	2
Coat foam with sealant	0	3
Base paint	0	3
Detail paint	0	6
Sew tail	8	2
Attach to platform	4	1
Totals	44	123
Materials	**Quantity**	**Cost**
Brown craft paper	1 yard	Stock
Athletic mesh	1 yard	Stock
Crochet hook	3 sizes	Stock
Beach ball	12" diameter	Stock
Masking tape	1 roll	Stock
Stock pot	6 quart	Stock
Bias tape	1 yard	Stock
Styrofoam pieces	6 chunks	Stock
Great Stuff	1 can	$7.40
Short dowels	8	Stock
Adult sweaters: chocolate brown, black and white, cranberry red, tan and ecru, tan, yellow	6	$24.46
Remnant stash: red fuzzy with multi-colored bits, yellow polyester, cream, thick brown, thick cream, thick black and brown, thick green and grey, multi-colored orange and green, white and yellow	Various	Stock
Total		$31.86

Appendix E: Dorothy Time/Cost

Designer: Whitney Whetstone	**"The Poppy Field"**	
Production Element: Dorothy		
Construction Procedure	**Estimate**	**Actual Hrs.**
Shopping	0	3
Glitter shoes	4	3
Paint face	2	6
Sculpt arms	20	13
Paint arms	2	2
Dye socks	0	2
Make hair	10	3
Stuff body	2	2
Attach to platform	0	1
Totals	40	35
Materials	**Quantity**	**Cost**
Batting	1 bag	Stock
Child's blue and white dress	1	$2.17
Styrofoam head	1	Donation
Styrofoam for arms	2	Stock
Foam coat	2 oz.	Stock
Brown yarn	1 skein	$7.62
2" black elastic	15"	Stock
Hot glue	1 bag	Stock
Women's control-top hose	I pair	Stock
Women's knee-high socks	1 pair	Stock
Paint: blue, red, yellow, white, black	5 oz.	Stock
Child's white Mary Jane shoes	1 pair	$3.26
Fake eyelashes	1 pair	Stock
Silver glitter	8 oz.	$7.62
White glue	1 bottle	Stock
Clear coat glaze	2 oz.	Stock
White basket	1	Stock
Stuffed dog	1	$6.53
White ribbon	1 yd.	Stock
Egg crate foam	Scrap	Stock
Ferns	2	Stock
Total		$27.20

Appendix F: Scarecrow Time/Cost

Designer: Whitney Whetstone	**"The Poppy Field"**	
Production Element: Scarecrow		
Construction Procedure	**Estimate**	**Actual Hrs.**
Shopping	0	3
Stuff body	3	2
Build frame	4	1
Sew and paint head	3	3
Hand sew clothing around frame	0	5
Drill shoes into frame	0	1
Attach to platform	0	1
Totals	10	16
Materials	**Quantity**	**Cost**
Batting	2 bags	$7.56
Child's flannel shirt	1	$3.26
Child's brown corduroy pants	1	$3.26
Child's brown leather shoes	1 pair	$3.27
Muslin	1 yard	Stock
Black paint	1 ounce	Stock
Straw hat	1	$2.17
Gloves	1 pair	Stock
2" L brackets	2	$8.70
Egg crate foam	Scrap	Stock
Twine	1 yd.	Stock
Total		$28.22

Appendix G: Platform Time/Cost

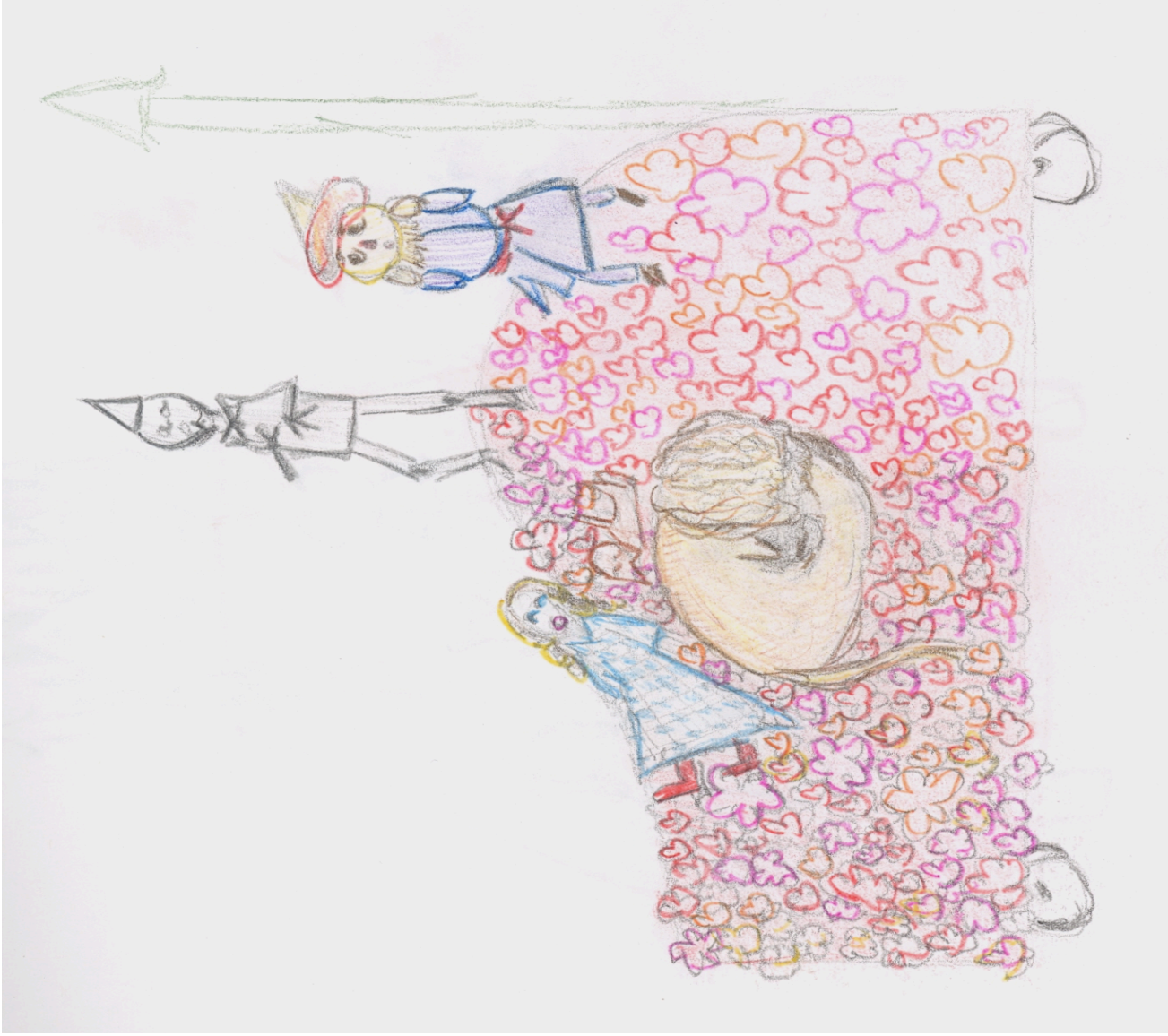
Designer: Whitney Whetstone	**"The Poppy Field"**	
Production Element: Platform		
Construction Procedure	**Estimate**	**Actual Hrs.**
Shopping	0	6
Cut and attach legs	0	2
Cut and attach bracing	0	3
Attach casters	0	2
Paint	0	2
Attach hardware cloth	0	1
Attach mylar	0	1
Totals	0	17
Materials	**Quantity**	**Cost**
10" Pneumatic casters	4	$74.08
3/8" Bolts, washers, and nuts, 2"	24	$36.98
3/8" Bolts, washers, and nuts, 3-1/2"	12	$10.59
8" L brace	4	$31.35
Green paint	1 quart	$14.16
Large Handles	2	$6.30
Small Handles	6	$16.94
Hardware cloth	1 roll	$15.03
Lumber	24' of 2x4	$19.91
Red mylar fringe		$26.05
Total		$251.39

Appendix H: Expenses

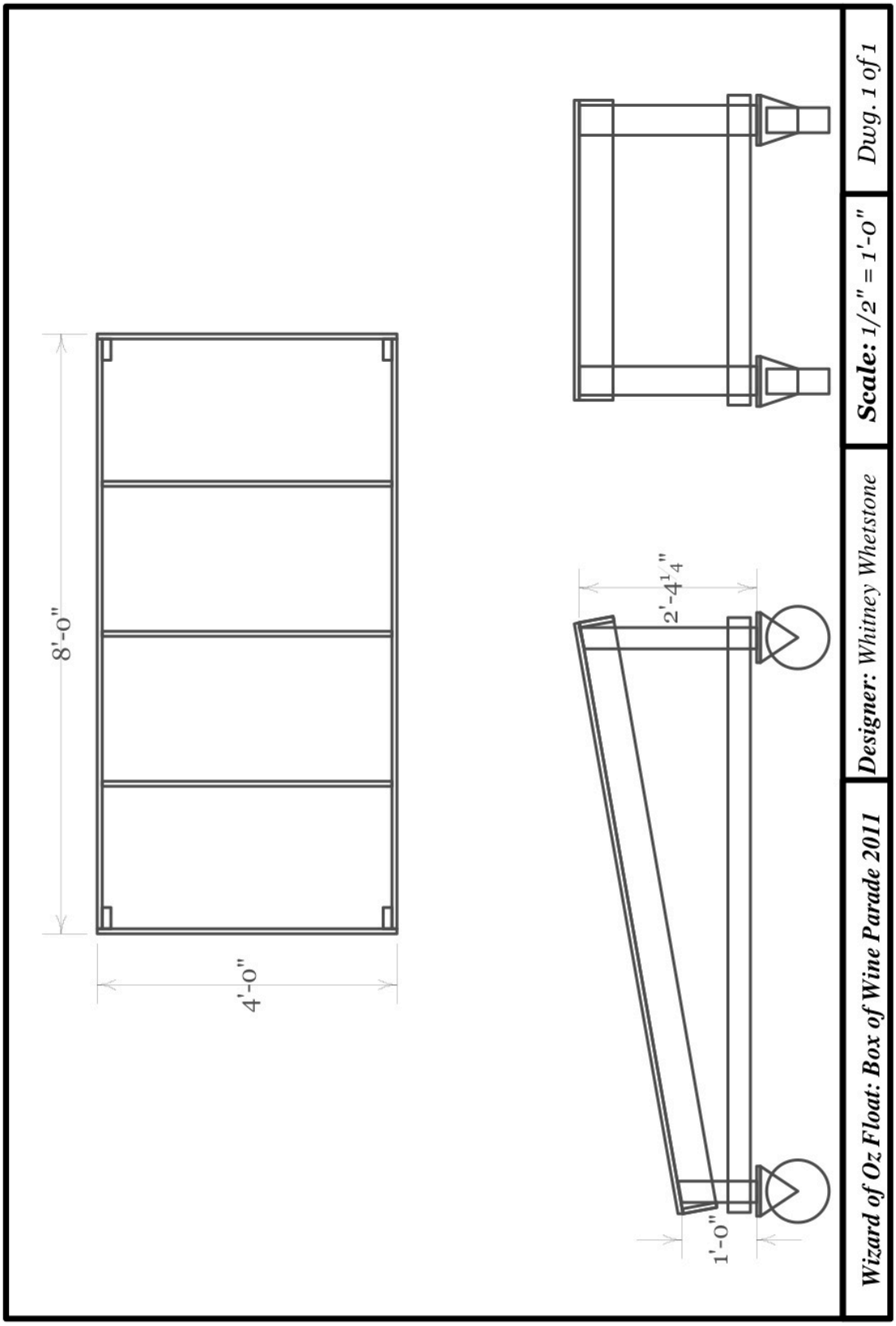
Item	Notes	Element	Cost
Child dress	Blue and white checks	Dorothy	$2.17
Child shoes	Girl's white Mary Jane shoes	Dorothy	$3.26
Glitter	8 oz. silver	Dorothy	$7.62
Stuffed dog	Plush dog for Toto	Dorothy	$6.53
Yarn	Brown for hair	Dorothy	$7.62
Christmas Ornaments	8 large balls with tips	Emerald City	$1.08
Christmas Ornaments	6 giant balls	Emerald City	$1.08
Christmas Ornaments	5 small pointy tops	Emerald City	$3.26
Christmas Ornaments	8 medium ball	Emerald City	$1.08
Christmas Ornaments	10 medium ball	Emerald City	$1.08
Christmas Ornaments	10 small balls	Emerald City	$1.08
Glitter	32 oz. emerald green	Emerald City	$17.40
Glitter	8 oz. lime green	Emerald City	$7.62
Glue	16 oz. spray Elmer's adhesive	Emerald City	$7.62
Lumber	8' of 1x6	Emerald City	$4.35
Great Stuff	1 can expanding foam	Lion	$7.40
Sweater	Thin brown yarn	Lion	$3.80
Sweater	Tan and ecru yarn	Lion	$3.80
Sweater	Tan yarn	Lion	$3.80
Sweater	Black and white mixed yarn	Lion	$5.44
Sweater	Yellow yarn	Lion	$3.80
Sweater	Red yarn	Lion	$3.80
10" Pneumatic casters	4 casters	Platform	$74.08
3/8" Bolts, washers, and nuts	24 sets, 2": attach casters	Platform	$36.98
3/8" Bolts, washers, and nuts	12 sets, 3-1/2": attach legs	Platform	$10.59
8" L brace	4 for platform corners	Platform	$31.35
Green paint	1 quart	Platform	$14.16
Handles	2 large storm door for back of plat.	Platform	$6.30
Handles	6 standard white for plat.	Platform	$16.94
Hardware cloth	½"x36"x10'	Platform	$15.03
Lumber	16' of 2x4 for bracing	Platform	$12.40
Lumber	8' of 2x4 for legs	Platform	$7.51
Red mylar fringe	48'	Platform	$26.05
Galvanized Wire	250 ft. 16 and 24 gauge	Poppies	$11.86
Pinwheels	4 pinwheels, nylon and hardware	Poppies	$4.36
Pipe cleaners	Gold	Poppies	$5.44
Mardi Gras Guide	Magazine	Research	$5.44
The Annotated Wizard of Oz	Hardcover color book + shipping	Research	$30.36
2" L brace	2 to stabilize shoes	Scarecrow	$8.70
Batting	2 16 oz. bag	Scarecrow	$7.56

Child pants	Brown corduroy	Scarecrow	$3.26
Child shirt	Blue plaid	Scarecrow	$3.26
Child shoes	Brown leather boots	Scarecrow	$3.27
Hat	Straw hat	Scarecrow	$2.17
15 washers	3/8”	Tin Man	$1.71
15 washers	3/16”	Tin Man	$1.06
Funnel	2 quart, plastic	Tin Man	$1.62
Funnel	½ pint, plastic	Tin Man	$0.97
Kitchen Gloves	1 pair	Tin Man	$1.62
Red bowtie	1, with sequins	Tin Man	$6.49
Spray Paint	Metallic silver	Tin Man	$3.53
Toy ax	Kid’s toy set	Tin Man	$1.09
Epoxy	1 bottle	Tin Man	$5.42
		Total	$465.28

Appendix I: Original Sketch



Appendix J: Platform Scale Drawing



Vita

Whitney Whetstone calls LA home – lower Alabama, Los Angeles, and Louisiana. She has worked in the theatre since the age of eight, debuting as a munchkin chef in *The Wizard of Oz*, and held different positions for many companies, including running the box office for an off-Broadway magic show, a set designer for small theatres and high schools, a production manager for an ensemble company in Los Angeles, and as a Prop Master at Louisiana State University. Whitney received her Bachelor of Fine Arts in Theatre from New York University and will complete her Master of Fine Arts in Properties Technology at Louisiana State University.